

The Association of Diplomatic Studies and Training
Foreign Affairs Oral History Project

MARILYN GREENE

Interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy
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INTERVIEW

Q: Today is the 9th of October, 2012. This is an interview with Marilyn Greene. This is being done on behalf of the Association for Diplomatic Studies and Training, and I'm Charles Stuart Kennedy. Marilyn has already done a series of interviews for the Foreign Service Institute, and as a newspaper reporter by trade she will be working with us. And so one, to explore, to open up to her as sort of our process that we do too, but also the fact that Marilyn has been on the international scene for some time and I'd like

to pick up your experiences there. So it's a two-fer, because Marilyn will be working with us. So to begin with, when and where were you born?

GREENE: I was born in Upstate New York, at Samaritan Hospital in Troy, on June 2, 1945. My parents tell me I was conceived in a tent on a camping trip over Labor Day Weekend of 1944.

Q: Yeah, those tents are dangerous.

GREENE: I grew up in Clifton Park, a town between Albany and Saratoga Springs, New York, in Saratoga County.

Q: Oh yes, is the Union Hotel there?

GREENE: Ah yes, it is, in Saratoga Springs.

Q: Yeah, I went to Williams College, which is --

GREENE: Right across the border.

Q: -- just over the hill. It's nice to get up there from time-to-time.

GREENE: Very beautiful.

Q: Well, all right. Well, let's start sort of on your father's side. What do you know about your father's side of the family? Where'd they come from? What were they up to? And how did they get to where they were?

GREENE: Well, let me start out by saying both my parents were osteopathic physicians. My father, Philip Greene, was born in Oneonta, New York, and grew up in Utica and Oneonta. His mother died when he was 11 and he was shipped off to his grandparents and had a very difficult childhood after that.

His brothers and sisters were sent elsewhere, so he was on his own with these people. They had come a couple of generations before that from Germany, and were very strict and stern. My dad decided at some point that he wanted to go to medical school, but had no financial backing. So he worked for the United States Post Office in Oneonta to pay his way through school, and graduated from the Philadelphia College of Osteopathy where he met my mother. My mother, M. Elizabeth Peck, came from a long line of Scots-English ancestors, many of whom were born and raised in Saratoga County. Her great-great-great-grandfather founded the Baptist church next door to the house I grew up in. And there were many families by the name of Peck living around there.

Q: Were there any family recollections of a little bit of trouble you had there up in Saratoga back in --

GREENE: *(laughs)* Oh, in the Revolution. Well, the church founder, Abijah Peck, did participate in the Revolutionary War as a 19-year-old drummer. But I don't believe it was in the Battle of Saratoga.

Q: Well, did you grow up in Troy or was mainly it in Saratoga Springs?

GREENE: Well, the only reason I was born in Troy was because my parents had their medical offices there.

But they actually lived in a place called Clifton Park Center. They both had offices in the house there, as well those in Troy. Clifton Park was a town where both my grandmother and grandfather Peck were town clerk at some point. I walked to a one-room schoolhouse for the first three grades, with my brother and sister. After that, the system was centralized and we went to a big school.

Q: How was that as to Saratoga Springs? Was it close by?

GREENE: It's about 15 miles south of Saratoga Springs.

Q: Well, let's talk a bit about a one-room schoolhouse. I mean this is one of these schools that is, you know, one always hears about. But how did it work?

GREENE: Well, there were eight grades in there. One teacher. And I honestly don't know how she kept the other classes busy while she was dealing with first or second grade. But I think we always had reading or exercises to do. And Miss Weatherill kept a pretty firm control over things.

Q: So in many ways you were probably exposed over your head.

GREENE: Yes, but it was great. We learned the Palmer Method of cursive writing; there were samples of it on placards placed around the room, above the blackboard. There was also a lot of reading aloud, which was wonderful. All eight classes could benefit.

Q: Well, one of the things I've learned is that the Palmer Method now is called "cursive writing" and our daughter said, "When you're writing to the grandkids, could you print out your stuff? Because he's not used to reading cursive writing," which I find just incredible. But there -- OK (laughs). What was the town like for a kid?

GREENE: It was mostly rural. My grandfather lived across the road and had dairy cows and cats and dogs and baby pigs. He used to cut ice from a pond in the winters, and sell it to people for their ice boxes. That was before my time, but that was one of the things he did. He was also the town clerk and postmaster. When my mother was in medical school, she had kind of an odd sense of humor. She sent home a human and that had come from a cadaver they were working on in anatomy class. Unfortunately, it leaked in the mail. And when the postmaster, i.e. her father, received it he was not very happy at all. That was

just one of the stories from our family. My mother had four brothers, and I suppose she thought this would interest them.

Q: (laughs) Did you all live in one house?

GREENE: For a time, before I was born, my mother and father, brother and sister shared a house with my mother's brother and his family -- wife, son and daughter. Plus, my parents had their medical offices upstairs. I can only imagine how crowded it was. My father fussed at whoever was cooking if they boiled cabbage or any other smelly thing, because of the patients.

Shortly before I was born, my parents bought an old general store building that was directly on the rural road. There were scales under the road, for farmers to weigh their goods for the store. My parents transformed the store, over the course of about two years, to a house for us and offices, dressing rooms and a waiting room for their practices.

Our maternal grandparents lived across the road. We used their property to raise our own horses, cows and sheep. We also had pet Bantam chickens, woodchucks, squirrels, rabbits, hamsters; and two raccoons, named George and John, after my mother's older twin brothers.

Q: Did you have siblings?

GREENE: I had a sister who was five years older and a brother who's three years older. All of us had animals and belonged to 4-H.

Q: What were you raising for 4-H?

GREENE: I raised Southdown sheep and grew flowers and vegetables. My brother raised Brown Swiss cows. I also had horses, although not for 4-H. We each had a cat, and also a series of dogs. One dog, an English Springer Spaniel named Tillie, produced 87 puppies!

Q: What were you kids doing after school and all?

GREENE: My mother kept us very busy. We got home from school and we had chores to do. Either weeding the garden or mowing, or I would maybe go horseback riding. But we were never allowed to be idle. If I went up to my room and closed the door she always hauled me out and made sure I was doing something 'productive.'

Q: On reading, were you able to sneak away and find a corner?

GREENE: Yes. I loved reading, and I still do. My father was more supportive of that kind of thing. And we also had music lessons, so we had to practice piano, clarinet. My sister played the oboe. And so that was something we had to do after school as well. We took swimming lessons at the Y in Schenectady, and for a time -- an eternity, it seems -- we were subjected to elocution lessons. We called them execution lessons.

Q: Good God. You were in other words a busy young lady.

GREENE: Yes. And I think my father would have liked one of us to be a doctor, but we saw how hard they worked. They had office hours all day and in the evening, except Thursday, plus on Saturday mornings. And they were on call at all times. They were country doctors, so they made house calls and it was very difficult to have time off. Office visits were \$25.

Q: Well, one thing, knowing that area, the winters can be pretty rough. What did you do during the winters?

GREENE: Well, the road that we lived on wasn't much used and it was on top of a hill. Since it was next to the church, we called it Piety Hill. We would go sledding down that hill when there was snow, or just played outside in the snow. There was a lot of snow in the winters back then, often three or four feet of it. We had a pond in back, where we skated in the winter. My Dad liked to hitch our horse King up to an old sleigh and drive us around.

It was so slow and rural then, that our dogs used to nap on the road. Today, the traffic is so horrific that it is dangerous to even walk along the *side* of that road.

Q: Did you have any ties to Skidmore College or not?

GREENE: No. The only connection to Saratoga Springs we had was visiting the springs and spa there and to swim at the park. We did go to Ballston Spa, the county seat, for the county fair, when we entered our animals and produce.

That was before the days of the Saratoga Performing Arts Center, which came along later on.

Q: Well, how long did you go to the one-room school?

GREENE: Three years. First, second, and third grade. I started first grade when I was five, because there was no kindergarten.

Q: Well, then when you moved out of the one-room schoolhouse what sort of school did you move into?

GREENE: It was a big central school that incorporated many small schools. The big school was completed when I was in the fourth grade. And that school -- Shenendehowa Central School -- just has kept growing and growing and has thousands of students now. My granddaughters go there!

Q: Going from a one-room schoolhouse to the big school -- was this an adjustment?

GREENE: It was. But it was exciting, and it was fun to ride the bus. We had walked to the one-room schoolhouse. And the transition it wasn't very traumatic. Our parents were the school doctors, so everything was pretty familiar. It was just kind of exciting.

Q: What sort of studies early on did you like and what ones didn't you like?

GREENE: Well, I always loved reading and stories. I always had trouble with math and later, chemistry. I did OK with botany and biology and later on grew to love those subjects very much. But math was a challenge. I repeated Algebra one year in summer school.

Q: Well, looking at this, they keep doing studies of why -- I think things are changing now -- but why were girls not as good in math and was it that they felt excluded? Did you have any feel for that?

GREENE: No, because my sister was very good in math. She was extremely good. So it - - in our case I think it was just -- individual brains.

Q: Well, you had a couple of schools nearby. You had Rensselaer Polytechnic at the time. Of course that was a -- you had to be good in math for that. Were you looking towards any particular field as you started high school and all?

GREENE: Yes. I had two aspirations. One was to become a journalist. I had a journalism teacher who had once worked for The Albany Times Union. Used to tell stories about covering government, politics and gangsters. I was very inspired by him. He was also adviser to our yearbook, and I was the editor. And so that was one inspiration -- toward journalism. The other was world history and geography. And so my dual aspiration. First I wanted to work for the United Nations. And then I decided to focus on journalism. I ended up majoring in French, political science and journalism in college.

Q: Well, how about the outside world? Did it intrude much in the house? I guess both your parents would be so busy. Did they talk much about current events and the Cold War and various things?

GREENE: No, they didn't. They really didn't. But my father was very curious about other cultures, other languages. As an adult, he studied French and German. He was always challenging us with questions and quizzes about other countries. What is the capital of this country? Which composer wrote this? He always wanted to see the world, to go places, see things, learn. It was inspiring.

Q: Did you get up to Canada and things like that?

GREENE: Not too often. They worked all the time. We had a camp, a hunting cabin, in the Adirondacks, with no electricity or plumbing. They called it Highland Lodge. We would go there mostly for Memorial Day and Labor Day weekends. Hiking, fishing. And my father would use it for hunting in the fall. But that was the place we went, and that

was very important to us all. I love the woods and the Adirondacks and the outdoors, and I'm sure it's because of that.

Q: Well, you had a pretty good childhood, didn't you, would you say?

GREENE: I did. I did.

Q: How about high school, did you get involved in the school paper or?

GREENE: We didn't have a paper. We just had the yearbook and as I said, I was editor of that. I was also a cheerleader. We didn't have football; it was basketball and soccer. I regretted that I didn't do the sport instead of the cheerleading, but it's too late for that now *(laughs)*.

Q. Well, then did you get much of a feel for the area? You know, a lot of stuff that went on around there.

GREENE: Well, we kind of felt as if we owned the area, because so many generations of my mother's family had lived there, since the 1700s. And until the population began to grow with the construction of the Adirondack Northway, a lot of people who worked in Albany began to move in. After that, it just changed dramatically.

But before then, it was mostly farms and farmers, a lot of whom were relatives and cousins. And so we felt very proprietary, I think. And my mother was very careful about preserving genealogy and history and old, old stuff -- way too much old stuff.

Q: So in high school, what subjects did you particularly take?

GREENE: I took the dreaded algebra. Twice *(laughs)*. Geometry and French and dreaded Latin. World history I loved. French, too.

Q: You got a good bit of exposure to the languages.

GREENE: Yes. I really enjoyed French and then later on I spent a semester in France, studying at the University of Poitiers.

Q: And radio, did you listen to WTRY?

GREENE: Well yeah, of course *(laughs)*.

Q: A cousin of my by marriage, Randy English, played a lot of music on WTRY.

Q: Were you pointed toward college?

GREENE: Oh yes, there was no question about that. By then, my parents were divorced. I was living with my mother. My mother was a fundamentalist Baptist in that tradition. My father was a Unitarian. So there was some disagreement about where I would be allowed to go. I wanted to go to St. Lawrence, for example, but my mother didn't want me to go there because it had been founded by Unitarians.

Q: Oh, heavens!

GREENE: But Syracuse University was OK, which is where I ended up first going, because that was founded by Methodists. And although I enjoyed it, I transferred away from there to Northwestern, eventually. But I enjoyed my time there.

Q: Well, you were there form when-to-when?

GREENE: From 1962 to '64.

Q: By the way, that reminds me. Did you get at all involved -- because so many young people did -- in the 1960 election between Kennedy and Nixon?

GREENE: No. Although I read The New York Times every day at school and I was involved in writing for The Daily Orange, the campus newspaper, I wasn't partisan. It was drilled into us that as a journalist, you do not choose sides.

Q: So at Syracuse, where'd you room?

GREENE: Well, for the first year I was in a dorm, Flint Hall high on the hill called Mount Olympus -- a long, long flight of stairs. Seventy-two, as I recall. I worked as a reporter for The Daily Orange, I took French and English, and studied political science at the Maxwell School of Citizenship. And then journalism; I was a journalism major and I had a very inspiring adviser, who made me aware of the internships and summer programs possible through Syracuse. I applied for an internship with the National Aeronautics and Space Administration, and began working there, in Washington, in July of 1963. It was fantastic. We had briefings with Hubert Humphrey and Barry Goldwater and Lyndon Johnson. We were flown in a DC-3 to visit Wallops Island. We attended one of John F. Kennedy's final press conferences. We were photographed with John Glenn.

And I met my future husband there. He was also an intern, from Northwestern University. And it's funny, I have a picture of us, all the interns with John Glenn in 1963. And now my youngest son is a lieutenant colonel in the Marine Corps. And last year he had a picture taken with John Glenn at a Marine Corps function. So that was kind of cool. It comes full circle.

Q: Well, at Syracuse, how did you find classes? Was it difficult to adjust?

GREENE: No, I loved it. I just loved it. Except for climbing the stairs to the hill, it was really good. It was very cold and snowy in the winter. But the classes were great. Really -

- I loved my religion and journalism professors. A memorable English instructor. I had nodded off in his seminar, in a huge room. Suddenly I woke up -- you know how awake with a start in church or a lecture sometimes? The professor was saying, "Ms. Greene, am I keeping you awake?" in front of hundreds of people.

Q: Did journalism break down into any particular elements that you specialized in?

GREENE: There were strains in magazine writing, advertising, PR and in news writing. As I was always interested in world affairs I leaned toward news. Reporting for the Daily Orange provided opportunities to cover any number of interesting lectures and speeches by visiting politicians, authors and world leaders.

Q: Well, you say you moved from Syracuse to another school.

GREENE: Right. Because I met this young man in the NASA internship program. However, in the meantime, I had applied for Syracuse University's Semester in France program. So in January of my sophomore year I went to Poitiers, France, to study there. Professor George was in charge of that. And that was also a fabulous experience. Poitiers is southwest of Paris. It's the town noted as the place where Joan of Arc raised her troops. And the university and a lot of the buildings in town are very, very old. There are many Romanesque churches. And the streets at that time were pretty soot-covered. You could smell the coal burning. It was a pretty, historic and interesting place. And it was very romantic and lovely. In retrospect, I marvel that my time there was only 20 years after World War II, and that things seemed very normal there.

Q: Did you get any whiff of the events, as they were called later, of '68 or something?

GREENE: No, I didn't. And I'm not sure whether in Poitiers it would have been the way it was at the Sorbonne. It was pretty intensely academic and wasn't a hotbed of political activity.

Q: Did Poitiers have a specialty more or less, or was it rural?

GREENE: It was fairly rural. It is located not far from Perigord where the ancient caves and petroglyphs are. But other than Jeanne d'Arc and its Roman history, I'm not sure what else it had to recommend.

Q: Well, did you find yourself getting into European events?

GREENE: Well, I traveled a lot. Especially at the end of the school year. Instead of coming back home, I stayed for the summer to study and travel with an organization called the International Religious Fellowship, IRF. And they had a school, Albert Schweitzer College, in Churwalden, Switzerland.

A group of young people from all faiths and from all over the world came together there. And then as part of this program, we would go home with various people to visit. I went

to families in Leicester, England and to Basel, Switzerland, and finally to the Netherlands, staying with a family who remain dear friends. I met a lot of people that way. It wasn't a political thing, but it was very person-to-person and sociable.

Q: Did you run across any American diplomats while you were doing this?

GREENE: No, not at that time.

Q: How did you travel around? Hitchhike?

GREENE: No, I took the train almost exclusively.

Q: Get to any of the communist countries?

GREENE: I did go into East Berlin, briefly, through Checkpoint Charlie. It really was pretty emotional to see that wall, to go through the doorway.

Q: Yeah. Well, then back to the States and where.

GREENE: When I came back from Europe it was time for my junior year. And that's when I went out to Evanston, Illinois and Northwestern, where I graduated from the Medill School of Journalism in 1966.

Q: Why Northwestern?

GREENE: Because that's where my fiancé was going to school. We eloped the August before my senior year.

Q: How'd the parents take that?

GREENE: His parents were furious and wouldn't speak to us. My parents were just, Oh well.

Q: How'd you find Medill?

GREENE: Well, I never felt the same attachment to Northwestern that I did to Syracuse, but it was certainly a fine school. I had a terrible time with press law there. I passed, but it was awful. Newspaper and magazine writing classes and the layout classes were great. And there were other courses there that I hadn't experienced at Syracuse. There was a Shakespeare class and there was a social history class. Things that were very interesting.

Q: Sounds like your classes dealing with newspapers and all that were pretty much hands on.

GREENE: Yes, and photography also; the classes were really hands-on, with the chemicals and the dark room and field photography.

Q: Did you get involved in Chicago politics?

GREENE: Well, there wasn't time, immediately after graduation, as I gave birth to twin boys eight weeks afterward. By fall, however, I was covering school boards in several Chicago suburbs -- Evanston, Wilmette, Winnetka, Northbrook -- for a chain of local newspapers. It was extraordinarily difficult, but that's how I got started.

GREENE: The biggest story I can remember from that time, was the September 1966 murder of Senator Charles Percy's daughter Valerie. I don't think they ever found out who did it.

It was a few months later, when our twins were six months old, that my husband went to work for the Rochester Times-Union, in Upstate New York. So we moved there. I was hired at the other Gannett newspaper there, the Rochester Democrat and Chronicle. The managing editor wouldn't give me a full-time (i.e. covered by insurance and benefits) job because the company had an anti-nepotism rule. So I was paid by voucher, and worked 40 hours a week anyway.

I had enough of that after a time, and got a job in Pittsford (a Rochester suburb), at a weekly newspaper, The Brighton-Pittsford Post. Features, school and county boards. Writing, editing and photography.

After a time I worked as a public information officer for the Board of Cooperative Educational Services in Fairport, another suburb, at a technical skills and special education school.

Q: How did you and your husband manage your careers?

GREENE: While we lived in Rochester, his beat was organized crime. Eventually he was hired by the New York State Organized Crime Task Force in Albany, and we moved east, back to the vicinity of my birthplace. We lived in Burnt Hills, about 20 miles north of Albany.

I then went to work for another Gannett newspaper, The Saratogian, in Saratoga Springs. And by this time we had a third son.

In the late 70s the marriage failed, and the boys and I moved to Ithaca, where I was hired by The Ithaca Journal to cover schools and government, and to eventually become features editor.

During our time in Ithaca, I met and married another Journal editor. Ithaca is a unique town, as are many college towns. Populated by very well-educated citizens, forward-looking and progressive.

The Dalai Lama visited our newsroom on a visit to the U.S. in the 1980s. We, the editorial board, all sat in a rather crowded room interviewing him, and I am proud to say that I touched knees under a coffee table with His Holiness! Subsequently, in 1992, followers of the Dalai Lama established Namgyal Monastery Institute of Buddhist Studies in Ithaca, as the North American Seat of the Personal Monastery of His Holiness. They chose as their headquarters the former home of The Journal's art director and his wife, a features writer.

In 1985 I was awarded a Gannett Fellowship in Asian Studies, and we moved to Hawaii while I studied Chinese language, history, art and geography. Joe, my husband, worked that year as an editor for the Honolulu Star-Bulletin.

My studies included travel throughout China, across the Silk Road.

Q: During the late '60s, how did you stand on our involvement in Vietnam?

GREENE: I had opinions, yes. I didn't think we belonged there. I knew many people from my childhood and high school who went to Vietnam and were killed. But I was not an activist, because first of all I had little children to look after; and secondly, reporters do not generally demonstrate for or against causes.

Q: What was Ithaca like?

GREENE: Wonderful. It is socially active, intellectually oriented and geographically beautiful. It's a wonderful place. It is home to Cornell University and Ithaca College, so the population is well educated and involved. They could be a pain in the neck to a newspaper editor because they were *very* critical. We'd get calls and letters all the time, complaining, "How could you do this?"

Q: Since some of the issues were personality driven, but you're reporting on it, how did you deal with that?

GREENE: A lot of times people reveal themselves just through what they say. And so the best way to communicate that is to quote them and let them speak for themselves.

And there are movements of people to achieve something or another. That's another means of self-expression. And if there were a conflict, say between a school board and a superintendent or teachers, both parties are very willing to speak up and articulate the issues. So it wasn't really difficult to present people's viewpoints. I have always made a point of seeking fairness and a well-balanced presentation of views.

Q: Well, did you feel that you were on the edge of something, reporting on local -- I mean these are local politics, but the change in the, in the role of women? I mean was this becoming more apparent at the time, or not?

GREENE: Well, especially in a place like Ithaca, it certainly wasn't the same world as it was when the guy in Rochester paid me by voucher (*laughs*).

Gannett had changed its policy by then. And in a place like Ithaca, of course, citizens are often at the forefront of any new movement. There was lots and lots of progressive thinking and rural strength and it was, and still is, a wonderful place to work and live.

Q: I have one man who I touch base with from time-to-time who was Political Counselor in Indonesia at the time when Sukarno was overthrown. And apparently, he crossed -- got crossed with the Head of the Indonesia Studies Department at Cornell. And they carried on a feud that's gone on to this day practically, because of the influence of communism, interpretations and all this.

GREENE: I do remember a lot of criticism of local people who were actually involved in national politics. Alfred Kahn, a dean at Cornell and chairman of the Civil Aeronautics Board during the Carter Administration, stirred up controversy that continues today, when he championed the 1978 deregulation of the country's airlines. Carl Sagan was another Ithacan, a man who made astronomy seem comprehensible to ordinary citizens. His insistence on the existence of extra-terrestrial beings also continues as a source of heated speculation. Rod Serling, creator of The Twilight Zone series, was an Ithacan.

Q: Well, when did you move on? Where did you go?

GREENE: In 1984, my sister died of breast cancer. It was a horrible, awful time. And at the same time, the Gannett Foundation's Asian Studies program became known to me. So I applied for the fellowship, was selected, and we went to Hawaii.

Q: And what was the fellowship designed for?

GREENE: It was designed for journalists to become more aware of and knowledgeable about Asian issues, and Asia. And to help them convey that enhanced understanding to their readers and viewers. I believe it indeed accomplished this. At the end of the year, my primary Chinese professor took the class on a Silk Road tour of China where we talked with leaders and ordinary people across the country from Beijing to Urumqi, and visiting key areas and using our Chinese language skills. It was very, very inspiring. After that, my husband and I sat down with the top news guys at Gannett and negotiated two jobs in Washington, which is what brought us here.

Q: Let's talk about what at the time when you're doing this, what was the Gannett empire like?

GREENE: Oh, it was thriving at that time. USA Today had just been established in 1982. And actually the people who worked in the outlying areas like Ithaca were kind of miffed because Gannett would take our reporters and editors for six-month stints in Washington and leave the local papers understaffed. We thought they took our resources from the newsroom -- money that we could have used for equipment and so on. It was all being

funneled into this big new enterprise. But eventually, of course, that wore off. Gannett owned dozens of newspapers all over the country at that time. And it was probably the heyday of the modern newspaper industry.

Q: Well, what did you think of Gannett? So many news organizations have their own outlook.

GREENE: Well, I think it did a good job in terms of fairness. There was an overall structure, but each editorial department had autonomy. So local issues and national issues were all dealt with from the standpoint of the publisher and the editor of that paper. There was no dictation from above.

Q: You didn't have the feeling that there was some oaf trying to direct you or something.

GREENE: Right. Financially that could be the feeling sometimes, because they did control a lot of the budgetary issues. Questions of when you get a new press and that kind of thing. But as far as editorial policy, no. There was none of that.

Q: Well, then you and your husband, what sort of jobs did you get?

GREENE: Well, at first Joe worked as Gannett's representative on the Commission on the Bicentennial of the United States Constitution, headed by Justice Warren Burger.

In time, Joe went to work for Gannett's chairman, Al Neuharth and eventually became Vice President for Customer Programs throughout the group's newspaper chain.

I started out in Washington as a reporter and editor with Gannett News Service, and later moved on to USA Today.

In the 1980s Al Neuharth did a couple of colorful things. The first enterprise was called BusCapade. He traveled all over the country in a large bus, visiting each state and interviewing every governor. Joe worked on that one, assisting Neuharth in arranging and conducting the program.

In 1988 Neuharth launched JetCapade -- a similar venture, but on an international scale. I was on his "Blue Team," covering Asia, Africa and the Middle East. The "Red Team" covered Europe and South America. The teams went out in advance to arrange interviews for Neuharth with heads of state in 30 countries, and team members conducted interviews with all sorts of other people whose lives reflected the flavor and focus of each country.

Four or five us -- reporters and photographers -- would fly into the country, interview ambassadors, mayors, storekeepers, artists, school kids for an everyman's view of the country.

Q: That must have been fun.

GREENE: It was. It was great. And that's where I interviewed a lot of the Ambassadors. My first interview with Winston Lord was while he was Ambassador to China and James Lily to Korea. Plus all of those countries' ambassadors in Washington.

It involved thousands of hours, thousands of dollars and dozens of staff people. And it was just extravagant. I mean for an interview -- with the Ambassador from Egypt or Israel, which were just very difficult embassies to get into here in Washington, to make the appointment, why are you doing this, the security. And you spend, you know, an hour or two with the Ambassador along with a photographer. And the result might be an inch or two of copy. I'm sure some of those ambassadors were really annoyed about that. But I think it was Winston Churchill who once sent a long missive to someone and said, "I would have written a shorter letter, but I didn't have time." So we valued conciseness in our JetCapade work. One country, one page. It was so much harder to write short than to write long.

Q: Yes (laughs).

GREENE: JetCapade took an entire year. And it was really the place where my international experience took off.

Q: Was this a popular series?

GREENE: Oh yes, it was. It ran every Friday for most of 1988. And people were very willing to cooperate, for the most part. We had a lot of respect and a lot of cooperation. It just seemed like an enormous expenditure for what resulted.

One good thing about it was that Gannett Co. Inc. also has Gannett News Service. And so we could use the full interview and have it go out to 20 or 30 newspapers through GNS. For example, we could always send the interviewee a clip from the Utica or Detroit or Rockford paper, where the interview would appear full-length. Hopefully that helped mollify people who thought they had invested more time in the interview than the USA Today version produced.

Q: Can you think of any interviewees that particularly struck you or incidents or something like that?

GREENE: Well, working in Saudi Arabia was a little bit difficult. I was there during the Gulf War and tried to interview some clerics about their position. One imam wouldn't speak to me unless my male driver accompanied me. I couldn't go alone as a female. And he wanted me to cover my head for the interview. I said, "I'm sorry, but I'm not going to do that." So he refused the interview -- and I gave in. But it really irritated me! Saudi Arabia was probably my least favorite country to be in, because it was so difficult to do

my job. It was really hard to get things done unless I hung out with the U.S. Military and went with them on the missions.

Q: We'll come to that, I'll come back to that. But did you find in that particular exercise that -- were the Heads of State amenable to a talk and all?

GREENE: Some, some of them. During JetCapade, heads of state were interviewed by Al Neuharth, after the advance teams had set things up for him. I typically interviewed the ambassadors and many 'ordinary' people. The ambassadors were almost always very willing.

Q: I'm told Fidel Castro, you don't interview, you just sit down and it spews out.

GREENE: Their interview lasted nearly all night. I think some of the people, maybe even Al himself, became drowsy, and some people went to sleep during the thing. But that was one notorious interview that I didn't experience. That was the purview of the "Red" advance team.

Later on, in the course of my regular reporting for USA Today, I traveled to Poland and interviewed Lech Walesa before he became president in 1990. We were supposed to do the interview over breakfast. At first he was very agitated, and said he didn't want to talk. We sat down anyway, and as soon as he had eaten some food, he calmed down. I figured he must have hypoglycemia. At the end of the interview, I asked if the photographer and I might follow him around on his Solidarity rounds of business for a day or so. His reply: "You've had an hour. That's enough."

On that same visit to Warsaw, I interviewed then-President Wojciech Jaruzelski, the last communist president of Poland. He told he had had no choice but to impose martial law in 1981, for the Soviet Union would have otherwise invaded Poland and taken over.

Unlike Walesa, Jaruzelski was the perfect gentleman: Bowed to kiss my hand, and presented me with a bouquet of flowers.

Q: He probably had a real point too. The issue of martial law was a very arguable thing.

GREENE: Well, Carl Bastiani, who was a consul at the consulate in Krakow at the time, argues that Jaruzelski was definitely a collaborator in the whole thing and that he was more than happy to institute marshal law.

Q: That was a much more serious situation than I think any of us really realized at the time. But in Africa, what was your impression of the leaders there?

GREENE: Well, generally speaking, the foreign reporting I have done has been crisis-generated. So I went to Somalia during the upheaval there, accompanying a group from the International Medical Corps. And in Mogadishu, the guard on top of our car was shot

dead. We spent a fair amount of time on the floor of the house we occupied, dodging attacks and bullets.

Q: Were you there when the embassy was evacuated?

GREENE: No, I was there before, before that, during the time when it was just in chaos really. And our focus was on the human crisis. At that time there wasn't really much leadership to interview. It was just chaos. So that was the point of most of the kind of coverage I did in those places -- the impact of the turmoil on the population, and on the non-governmental agency work there. There was usually a reference to the U.S. position on this situation. And if there were leaders available to talk to, we would do that. But in many cases that wasn't possible.

Q: Well, when we had to evacuate our embassy it was really touch and go there. I think Jim Bishop was our Ambassador at the time.

GREENE: It was very dangerous. And another situation -- it sounds crazy to say this -- but one of the places I was ever most afraid was in Haiti when the airport was closing down and people wanted desperately to leave. That last day of flights there was a human stampede and it was very scary.

Q: Now, being a reporter you move around. Foreign Service, you're kind of there. You may have to go through the whole procedure, but if you happen to be in the right place nothing in particular happens.

GREENE: Right. Speaking of the Foreign Service -- this has no date in particular involved -- but one of the things I've noticed. I was in Cameroon for three months in 2005 and overheard a number of consular officials' interviews with people wanting visas to leave Cameroon to visit friends or relatives in the United States. I thought the questions were pretty harsh, and the officials' attitude seemed extremely hostile.

It was almost as if these people were criminals being interrogated. "Why do you want to go to the United States? Well, prove this and prove that." And people would come out of there just crushed, you know. I realize that many more people want to come than is possible, but this seemed harsh, and it was really tough to watch.

Q: It's very difficult. My profession basically was Consular Officer. And in some countries you have to start from the idea that these are people who are trying to get in past your visa line and you are the last guardian of the holy threshold.

GREENE: What countries?

Q: Well, I was in -- served in Korea, Vietnam, Italy, Naples, and all. And -- well, and Yugoslavia, Greece, and Germany.

GREENE: Wow.

Q: Anyway, in some of these places there's a tremendous desire to go, and fair enough. But we just have to see that they meet the law. And most don't meet the law, particularly some of the places you were the people were lined up to go, there were reasons for a line. They wanted to get the hell out.

GREENE: And a lot of them just disappear once they get here.

Q: Oh, you know, once they're in, terrible getting 'em out.

GREENE: Right.

Q: It's not a fun process.

GREENE: No, it's not. I wouldn't want to be a Consular Officer.

Q: Did you get the feeling that the people you'd meet at the embassies and all were aware of the problems that they're dealing with or sympathetic to them or not, or?

GREENE: Sometimes.

Q: And sometimes not.

GREENE: Sometimes I sensed that there was a great arrogance and sense of paternalism. A lot of times, in fact.

Q: It's very hard. It's very difficult. I know I would have problems with supervising people who were Consular Offices. Particularly in a place like Korea where there are people who are trying to get past our regulations by saying that even if they get in they're going to make very good citizens. So you know, do your best. But if they do, don't take this baggage with you and feel everybody's lying to you and are lying in a good cause.

GREENE: Well, especially if the argument is persecution. A lot of people seem to ramp up their experience in order to qualify as an asylee, rather than, "I'm poor and I can't find work and I really want to get out of here."

Q: Yeah. Emotionally it can be just absolutely draining. And to do this day after day, you do develop a certain arrogance. Well, I'm told by some people, say in Mexico or something, they look at their hands. And if their hands look like they're calloused, then they're not going to Disneyland to have fun. They're going to the States to get a job. And you have to -- you're dealing with class. It's terrible. But I mean there it is. I mean people with money will come back. People without money will stay. And so what's more, class-ridden decision than that? How did you feel about our ambassadors?

GREENE: Generally speaking, I thought they were fantastic. Of course the Lords were famous for being social. I talked with them several times.

Q: Did you meet his wife, Betty Bao, who's a well-known author?

GREENE: Yes, I did. Both in Beijing, and later on, at the Plaza Hotel in New York.

GREENE: During the Gulf War, the Ambassador to Kuwait, Edward (Chip) Gnehm, was great I saw him in Taif, Saudi Arabia where the Kuwaiti government worked in exile during the Iraqi occupation of Kuwait. Before that and before the U.S. launched Operations Desert Shield and Desert Storm, I would have phone interviews from Washington with then-Ambassador Nathaniel Howell, who was still working inside the surrounded embassy. I admired him greatly.

I interviewed Ambassador Jack Matlock in Moscow around the time that it was discovered that our embassy there was full of "bugs" and had to be abandoned. Then again, when the Matlocks accompanied Mikhail and Raisa Gorbachev on their visit to the United States in June, 1990.

It was during that visit, in Minnesota, that I saw Condoleezza Rice, then President George H.W. Bush's special adviser on Soviet and Eastern European affairs, being rudely prevented from joining the Gorbachev party by a U.S. security officer. He apparently did not recognize her and told her to stay back. Later, I tried to ask Rice about the incident but she would not talk about it.

Q: When did you do Moscow?

GREENE: A couple of times. Once, that was on our JetCapade route, so we did that at that point. I traveled to Novosibirsk in Siberia to do common-man interviews, and there was this man working down by the river. I don't know if he was a fisherman or truck driver, but all of his teeth were silver. And he came up to me and he said, "You're the first American I've ever seen." I'll never forget that.

So in 1988 we were all over Russia doing that page. And then later on, close to the end of the Gorbachev era and of the Soviet Union, in 1989 and 1990.

Later on, I became executive director of a nonprofit organization and went back to Moscow and several of the former Soviet republics in an advocacy role.

Q: What were you doing in that?

GREENE: Well, that was later in the 1990s. I worked at USA Today until 1996 and then became executive director of the World Press Freedom Committee, a global nonprofit that basically works to persuade governments to change their laws so that the laws do not stifle press freedom.

Q: Well, let's stick to .SA Today. What was the background of Al Neuharth, the founder?

GREENE: He was born in Eureka, South Dakota. And he's just a self-made man who, who became involved in Gannett and then became the chairman and then had this idea. He's the creator of USA Today and he still writes a column for the paper, although he's getting along in years. And he was just a very, very colorful -- he wasn't colorful, he always wore black and white -- but a very, very precocious and creative man. {Al Neuharth died April 19, 2013 at the age of 89}.

Q: I'm thinking he'd be difficult to work for. Or not.

GREENE: Well, I did -- yes. My husband worked closer to him. There was a tower -- one tower -- if you remember those tear-shaped steel buildings in Rosslyn. One was the executive tower for Gannett Co., Inc. and one was headquarters for U.S.A. Today. Both the corporate headquarters and the newspaper office are now located in McLean, Va. And yes, I think he was difficult to work for, and demanding. One time during JetCapade when we were in Kenya, I was working on the advance team setting things up in Nairobi. And I got a call from Neuharth's Washington office saying that he wanted to visit Mombasa, on the coast, 300 miles from Nairobi. And would I please go there right away to arrange his accommodations.

I needed to find a hotel with two master suites and 18 rooms. He needed orange juice on hand every day, with ice. And he required a certain kind of wine -- Pouilly-Fuisse, if I recall correctly. All these were requirements that I needed to go and arrange. And so I took time from reporting in Nairobi, flew to Mombasa and met with various hotel managers to see if we could set this up. I finally came to a tentative agreement with a Swiss manager who said they didn't have that kind of wine but they would be sure to get it. But when I phoned back to Washington with all of this, they said, "Oh no, never mind. He's going to stay at the Safari Club."

So this poor hotel guy that had made all these concessions and promises had expected all this business and wasn't going to get it. But it was that kind of thing you had -- the advance team had to make sure that everything was right for Mr. Neuharth. Then he came with a private plane and would touch down and stay for a little while and then take off again.

On that same visit to Kenya, I did some real reporting as well. The country Peace Corps director took me to several Peace Corps sites throughout the country. The most memorable of these -- and one of the most stunning experiences in my entire career, was being welcomed in a Kenyan village by hundreds of women singing to us, embracing us,

urging us to embrace them and eat. It brought tears to my eyes. If you have ever heard African *acapella* singing you have an idea of what I am talking about.

Q: Did you get involved in Israel?

GREENE: Yes, I did.

Q: How did that go? The Israelis are usually so good at taking visitors of any ilk and turning them into partisans. Were they doing this or?

GREENE: Well, in Israel some of the people we wanted to interview were Yitzhak Shamir [*Prime Minister of Israel 1983-84 and 1986-1992. Died June 30, 2012*] and Teddy Kollek [*Mayor of Jerusalem 1965 to 1993. Died Jan.2, 2007*]. We did some interviews on the West Bank as well.

But I think the heads-of-state interviews were unusual in that Neuharth was probably more concessional than a reporter would be, just so he could get these interviews. Still, we tried to be objective. One page, the page on China, created problems with Chinese authorities because we included Taiwan and China on the same page.

Q: Ouch. And of course, the embassy has to bear the brunt.

GREENE: That's right.

GREENE: OK, let's see. We did Israel in March of '88 and interviews with Yitzhak Shamir, Ariel (a settlement) Mayor Ron Nachman. We interviewed Teddy Kollek, U.S. Ambassador Thomas Pickering, and Israeli Ambassador Moshe Arad. Pickering was great. We did a lot.

Q: Yeah. I'm interviewing our Consular General in Jerusalem now by telephone. But were you able to go out to the West Bank?

GREENE: Yes.

Q: And did you get what you'd feel would be rather candid interviews?

GREENE: I think so. I mean and it was I believe not on this trip, but on a later news reporting trip that I actually went to Ramallah and talked with people at the refugee camp there. And Hanan Ashrawi, who was a member of the PLO Executive Committee and a close colleague of Yasser Arafat. And yes, it was difficult to stay objective about that, when you see people who were in their thirties and they had lived in that refugee camp all their lives.

Q: Yeah.

GREENE: But my Palestinian driver and interpreter had to put a keffiyeh, the black and white wrap, up in the back of the car when we crossed over the border, so we would be allowed back and forth.

Q: It's a very, very difficult situation there. And also a difficult one to report on because if you are not 100% pro-Israeli you could come under quite a bit of criticism. This must have been a tremendous course in foreign affairs for you.

GREENE: It was mind-boggling. You can see how much had to be packed into a short time. In one week, I might be writing about Poland, and then Iran and Japan. I mean the stories are just totally all over the place. In addition to international affairs and the State Department, I covered the East Wing of the White House and Congress.

Q: Well, I'm looking at the time. I think this could be a good place to stop.

GREENE: OK.

Q: And I'll pick it up next time. We do want to cover in some detail The White House and all. And you know, looking through there if you think of any incidents or anything that are sort of interesting of your personalities, I mean it's a great experience.

GREENE: Well, it's broad, but not deep.

Q: Well, this of course is sort of what I'm doing too here. You know, I'm talking to people who've been involved in all sorts of things. But so anyway, we'll pick this up next time, we'll cover The White House.

GREENE: OK.

Q: OK. Today is October 16th, 2012 with Marilyn Greene. And Marilyn, we were going to pick it up when you were covering The White House and other places. But I'd like to go back a bit. I was just listening to part of our interview. You said something about talking to the Palestinians and all. And you said it's hard to be objective. And I was wondering whether, on reflection, is this part of the idea that -- I mean basically a great injustice is being done -- I don't think there's any way around it -- to the Palestinians. But since the Israelis are our close allies, as our presidents keep reminding us, is this a way of trying to duck the issue of making judgment? This is almost, you know, a code word or something.

GREENE: What --

Q: By being objective.

GREENE: Well, I think the choice of the story was an attempt to show the other side. By going to Ramallah, going to the refugee camp and talking with some of the Palestinians and just letting them talk about some of the problems, I felt that was very productive in

presenting the other side. Because I do believe it's very difficult through normal everyday commerce to see that side of it. We hear so much about the Israeli side and the Israeli state being under threat from all of its neighbors, that we don't hear about the farmers who were displaced and the orchards that were destroyed to make settlements, and the people who had lived there for generations being booted out and told that this is an Israeli state now and you don't belong here. And plus, we're going to treat you like criminals when you try to go into Jerusalem to work. So without saying it in that blunt a fashion, it was my intention to just go there and describe what I saw.

Q: Did you get any feedback?

GREENE: Yes, I think the Palestinians were appreciative and very, very glad to have someone see what they were living with. But I can't say that in a broader scale in terms of the readership that there was any great commotion. We did have to be very careful traveling back and forth over the line between the Israeli area and the Palestinian area. But as I said, it is, it's sometimes hard to be objective. Not only because of the situation, but because of the facts that are made available to you, the people who are made to speak with you, the obstacles that might be thrown in your way to get permission to travel to areas where you might hear information from other sources.

Q: You mentioned you were with Teddy Kollek, the Mayor of Jerusalem. One of these figures that's bigger than life. How did you find him?

GREENE: Very interesting and verbal. As I say, we were part of a team who interviewed people in advance of the chairman coming to interview the head of state. But Teddy Kollek of course is very famous and colorful and I can't recall the substance of the interview. But they're all -- I can't think of anybody in that position, either a head of state or an important person in a country who wasn't very happy to have the opportunity to be heard.

Q: You were in Washington from when-to-when?

GREENE: From 1986 until now. We lived in Honolulu for a year, an interim year between local newspaper life and national.

Q: What were you doing in Hawaii?

GREENE: I was at the University of Hawaii on a Gannett Fellowship in Asian Studies, studying Asian politics, language, geography and history. I was also fortunate enough to squeeze in classes on Hawaii's natural history, Asian art and the hula!

Q: Well, you came to Washington. What job did you have?

GREENE: I went to work for Gannett News Service, which is owned by Gannett Co., Inc, the same company owning USA Today. And it provides news from the Hill to newspapers all over the country, focusing on their congress members and senators. If

Gannett had a paper in Nebraska, for example, we would follow the congressman and senators from that state and their issues and send stories back to the newspapers. And we provided overall general interest stories on science, technology or social affairs that would be of interest to people across the country.

Q: Did you follow any particular people that were memorable?

GREENE: Well, there were lots of issues. Health care was a big issue then. There were some space stories going on and each part of the country had its own industry and interests and we would try to track down the relevant stories originating in Washington to send back to the newspapers that Gannett owned in those cities.

Q: Gannett, one always thinks of USA Today. But it really is much more. It has another side, which is --

GREENE: Local newspapers. And that's really how Gannett began. It began in Rochester, New York with Frank Gannett and blossomed into dozens of newspapers all across the country. And that localness was really the heart of the Gannett Company and Gannett News Service and the Gannett Foundation, until Al Neuharth became chairman and started having this more global view and decided to start USA Today, which was nothing like the other newspapers.

Q: Did you find you had to adjust to that, or were you continuing the way you'd done before?

GREENE: Well, you can't continue the way you've done things for a local newspaper when you are writing for a national and international newspaper.

USA Today started out with artists and photographers and writers and editors taken from the other newspapers. And gradually, they hired people who had not been with Gannett. Who had come from, you know, The New York Times or Newsweek. But the whole approach was different, of course, for a national and globally oriented newspaper. The original idea was that it was written for the traveler, the person who didn't have a lot of time to read an entire eight columns of news on every page. So the idea was of being more succinct and maybe a little more, you know, jazzy than your typical local newspaper.

Q: Well, we're talking about the early days. Did you feel that the newspaper had a point of view, a thrust?

GREENE: Well, you probably remember that it was an object of great derision.

Q: I remember that.

GREENE: And it was among the Gannett newspapers as well. But I think over the years that has changed quite a bit, especially as it's become more visible in other countries.

And I think it has a great respectability now. And at one time it was tied with The Wall Street Journal for circulation. Your question again was?

Q: I was wondering whether -- did it fit somewhere on the political spectrum or --

GREENE: Oh, did it -- I don't think so. I mean I think probably editorially most of the people who work there are somewhat liberally oriented. But they were very, very, very conscientious about on the editorial page presenting both sides of any story, any issue. The editorial page would take a stand. And then you would have columns by both people who supported that position and opposed it. It was almost a formula. You had to have exactly a balance of views.

In terms of objectivity in covering news, there is inevitable bias in the selection of the story to cover, the selection of a headline, the suggestion of what's going to be your lead, choosing adjectives, selecting the order one presents facts and quotes.

Those are all opportunities for expressing views in subtle ways. I believe almost every single newspaper I know has that tendency.

Q: Well, I was wondering. I would assume that particularly as it was the new paper, those on the staff and everyone else was watching the whole thing, taking the paper's temperature and all.

GREENE: *(laughs)* Yes, I think so. But as I say, I think it really has been a very fair minded, well-balanced editorial production.

Q: When did you go to The White House?

GREENE: Let's see. I started covering the Bush White House around 1989, after I came back from the JetCapade experience in 1988. I covered mostly the East Wing and Mrs. Bush, but also foreign affairs as they impacted The White House. I traveled with The White House Press Corps to various places. With Mrs. Bush, for example, to the inauguration of Costa Rican President Oscar Arias. In 1989 I traveled with the Bushes to Paris summit meeting. It was in July, and happened to coincide with the 200th anniversary of the storming of the Bastille. There was a huge celebration on July 14, 1989, at the American Embassy in Paris. Mrs. Bush and Mrs. Mitterrand had a meeting and at night the whole city was a huge party.

Q: How'd you find Mrs. Bush?

GREENE: I think Mrs. Bush is one of the most fantastic human beings I've ever met. She's tough as nails. She doesn't take any crap from anybody. And yet, she's compassionate and articulate, and very, very involved and caring about the country. I just think she is amazing.

Q: Did you find yourself getting in her good or bad books?

GREENE: Oh, I probably got in her bad books a lot. She's *very* private. We one time found out it was her birthday, I think it was her 64th birthday. And she didn't want anybody to make a fuss about it or even know about it. She had a really cranky and protective press secretary, Anna Perez, who was very good at shielding her. And Barbara Bush didn't mind telling you off: "I don't know why you ask those questions. That's rude." But you know, I just really respected that a lot (*laughs*). I think I had asked her about whether she used anything special to make her hair so white. Even interviewed her hair stylist.

Q: Well, did you get any insight into her relationship with her husband?

GREENE: Oh, she adored her husband. She does adore him, and supports him. But there was one issue where this came into question. President Bush had made it clear that he opposed abortion. But we had an inkling that she might not be so adamant about it as he was, or perhaps even supported it. She let some things slip that would indicate this and it caused quite a ruckus. That was the only issue that I ever detected where she wasn't quite on the program with him.

Q: Did you get beyond the President's wife in your coverage?

GREENE: Of course. I look back at the clips and the dates and the issues that were coming -- covering trade issues at the time we were covering that birthday issue. And it, it was just -- as I said before -- a broad array of issues. Not always really deep. But very comprehensive (*laughs*).

I covered Mrs. Bush's literacy campaign, often accompanying her on visits to schools. Kids loved hearing her read Judith Viorst's 1972 book, *Alexander and the Terrible, Horrible, No Good, Very Bad Day*.

You'll recall the family dog, Millie. Well, I covered her maternity and the birth of her pups. Son George got one of them, Spot. I interviewed a group of Mrs. Bush's best friends in Houston, including Mildred Caldwell Kerr... Millie's namesake. I was dispatched to interview each of the children about what it was like to have George and Barbara Bush as parents. Jeb in Florida, Doro in Maine, Neil in Denver, George in Texas. Marvin was the one hold-out.

Q: Well, how were sort of relationships within the news pack? I mean I'd think you'd all be aiming to get either an exclusive interview or to get a point of view strengthened by a quote or something? I would think it would be sort of like a NASCAR (National Association for Stock Car Auto Racing) race.

GREENE: It is. But it's not as nice as a NASCAR race.

Q: (laughs) NASCAR race without the politeness.

GREENE: More crashes (*laughs*). It's very competitive and you have to have a very thick skin to deal with ego blows, and a hard head for getting hit with cameras and booms. The work can also very undignified.

For example, I covered a lot of state dinners. And the White House people kind of herd the reporters behind a rope, just like cattle. When the guests come in, you are given the opportunity to shout questions at them. You know, "Have you stopped beating your wife?"

You could ask anything you wanted. But it was really undignified (*laughs*). Afterward, they would stash you back in the press room while they had their dinner and bring you out for the entertainment and the speeches or whatever. Occasionally, after the dinner and before the entertainment, they will turn the reporters loose for a few minutes to talk with guests. I will never forget the joy of meeting James Michener in such a circumstance, and asking him which of his books he liked best. "Poland," he replied.

After the event, you'd rush back and try to get the best story you could before midnight.

Scrambling among camera booms and microphones is especially typical covering the State Department, where you are staking out the front of the building to catch some ambassador or some undersecretary. {Since those days, of course, security has increased to the point that it's not easy to get anywhere near the area one might spot and talk with a dignitary}. And everybody's hollering questions. It's really not fun. Of course, the ideal situation is when you can have a one-to-one interview and you can really get to ask sensible questions and see the other person as a human being.

Q: Well, I think, you know, the State Department, the ambassadors are not protected the way the President is more or less. Could you get some good interviews on the way in and out?

GREENE: Not particularly. Those are just really kind of one-liner things. If you wanted to talk to a foreign ambassador or a U.S. official, you need to make an appointment and go meet them. Generally, that works very well. The Israeli and the Egyptian embassies are of course the most difficult to get into. And then, others are just delighted to have people be interested in their countries. But at the State Department, during press conferences or the daily briefings, it was kind of hard to get anything substantive. You know that they come out with a thick briefing book, ready to thwart you or avoid your questions. Same with The White House. There is a prepared answer. So you try to catch them off balance and say something they didn't mean. Which is not a very nice way to be.

Q: No.

GREENE: It's one of the things I don't miss at all about being a journalist. I often felt that when people were nice to me or hostile to me it was because of my job, not anything

to do with me as a human being. Which I suppose is probably as it should be. But it was in great contrast to my later work, where interaction was on a more personal basis.

Q: Well, you did this until when?

GREENE: I was a reporter for USA Today until 1996. With another fellowship in there, in 1993. Back to Asia with a lot of writing and story-filing from Japan, China and Vietnam. I did a fair amount of reporting from Vietnam regarding the lifting of the embargo. Our willingness to lift the embargo was linked directly to Vietnam's cooperation in handing over information about POWs (Prisoners of War).

There was also the issue of our use of Agent Orange during the war, and the impact this had on Vietnamese civilians. I visited scientists who had jars in their labs filled with deformed fetuses that they attributed to Agent Orange.

Children resulting from the intermarriage of American soldiers and Vietnamese women posed another problem. These people, many of them, especially the children of black men and Vietnamese women, were often discarded and abandoned by their mothers and either not recognized or even known to their fathers. A lot of these kids ended up in orphanages with very sad lives. They were shunned by both Americans and Vietnamese. So there was a wealth of stories there in the aftermath of the Vietnam War.

Q: It's a very poignant situation there.

GREENE: It was. It was very touching. And then there was the political prisoner thing, too. Dr. Doan Viet Hoat, a dissenter, was in prison at that time. I visited his wife in Ho Chi Minh City. She took me around on the back of her little motorcycle to visit various other families who were involved in the effort get political prisoners freed. Dr. Hoat finally did get free, and he came to the United States and now lives in Virginia. He became quite a spokesman for free speech, and I think our stories helped to bring attention to that issue. Later on, the World Press Freedom Committee invited him to become a member of our executive committee.

Q: Well, on the issue of prisoners of war and not being released, I mean at one point this was a very political issue. In fact, the president, presidential candidates, Ross Perot made quite a point of this.

GREENE: Yes. Yes.

Q: It never made an awful lot of sense.

GREENE: Well, I don't think they ever came up with a definitive resolution of questions about POWs remaining in Vietnam.

Q: You know, there are still people who think that somewhere there's a prison full of Americans who don't know the war is over.

But it was very, very political.

GREENE: Yes.

Q: Did you run across people trying to prove their point to you?

GREENE: Well, mostly I heard about what happened to people, where the remains were. There was a major dig by the U.S. military while I was there. In one area they had found some remains and the remnants of an airplane that had crashed. They wanted information about what happened to these people. And I'm not sure that was ever satisfactorily resolved. It was presented as kind of a scandal. And I'm sure, you know, there were some situations in which that was the case. But I'm not sure to what extent.

Q: Yeah. It seemed that the awful thing was that -- I mean there were people, particularly in the right wing of the political spectrum in the States, desperately wanted to prove that the Vietnamese had stables of American prisoners, which they would go out sometime, and the Vietnamese -- the main thing they were doing was identifying the dead.

GREENE: That's right. And there were a lot of identifications made. And that partially satisfied the question. Still, it was a messy ending to the whole thing.

Q: How did you find traveling around Vietnam?

GREENE: It was lovely. It's a beautiful country. I traveled the whole length of it, visiting a lot of old war sites and talking with people who had worked with the Americans, or not.

There was a war museum in Hanoi that purported to show all the atrocities that Americans had committed, which was kind of interesting. And then, you know, the north/south divide was still pretty evident in terms of people's attitudes.

Q: Did you have any problem with the Vietnamese authorities?

GREENE: Yes. I wanted to see Dr. Hoat, and they told me they didn't know where he was. "Dr. Who?" And when Mrs. Hoat was driving me around she took circuitous routes because she was certain we were being followed.

I also attempted to visit another imprisoned dissident, Dr. Nguyen Dan Que, an endocrinologist and pro-democracy advocate. Dr. Que has spent more than 20 years in jail since 1978, and is imprisoned right now for advocating human rights in Vietnam. But the authorities stonewalled me on that, too, and they weren't particularly polite about it. They just pretended or asserted that I didn't know what I was talking about.

Q: How did you find the prisons? Did you go to the prisons?

GREENE: Well, of course I want to Hỏa Lò prison -- the "Hanoi Hilton" -- where John McCain was held prisoner for more than five years after he was shot down in 1967.

By then, of course, it was an empty building. And no, I was not allowed to go to any active prisons, and authorities denied that they even existed.

Q: Were people coming up to you and whispering, "Go see this," or "Go see that?"

GREENE: The people who were in that little dissident community were doing this, but generally speaking people were just interested in making money. The big issue while I was there was, "Please lift the embargo, we need your business." There were people selling t-shirts that said, "Lift your embargo," and it finally was lifted in February 1994. The people were interested mostly in economic issues. This is not surprising, as most Vietnamese alive today were not even born at the time of the war. The median age is now around 28. They were really wildly interested in making money. There was a lot of activity going on with businesses and so on.

Q: Well, really when one thinks about the whole situation, I mean here we are, enemies at not necessarily swords-point, but then all of a sudden the name had changed and they're out to prove something to us and we're out to prove something else.

GREENE: Right. And I guess you know Terry Anderson and some of the other people who had been prisoners or soldiers during the war fought very hard to get that embargo lifted. Louis Puller, Jr. was one of them. Also former Navy Secretary James Webb, who was a combat Marine during the war, and James Kimsey, co-founder of AOL. But there was a really strong and active community working toward reconciliation with the Vietnamese. And Admiral Elmo Zumwalt, the man who ordered the use of the defoliant Agent Orange and whose son died of exposure to it, advocated reconciliation and assistance to victims.

Q: Did you get any chance to cover any Americans who chose to stay behind?

GREENE: Yes. I met and interviewed George Esper, the tenacious Associated Press correspondent who covered the war and declined the opportunity to leave Vietnam in the final evacuation. Although he had been back to the U.S. in the meantime, he was in Hanoi as AP bureau chief when I met him and heard his stories about the final days of the war. *[Esper died in February 2012].*

Q: Were they beginning to talk about having diplomatic relations at the time?

GREENE: Well, that was something I covered on this end. At that time, they only had an ambassador to the United Nations, Le Van Bang. And yes, diplomatic relations was very much a topic. Vietnam wanted to establish diplomatic relations and eventually that happen, and Le Van Bang did become the first post-war ambassador. And I think that was a very positive step.

Q: Did you have the feeling that the Vietnamese who were dealing with us knew which buttons to push, and we didn't know which buttons to push on the American side?

GREENE: Probably. I think on our side we were dealing mainly with the domestic view of the war and its aftermath and people. The families who were still wondering what happened to their loved ones or who were bitter about the fact that we had been there at all. So on our side, there was a lot of domestic opinion to deal with. And on the Vietnamese side, I think everybody wanted to be friends with the Americans, no matter which side they'd been on in the war. They wanted to finally have it just be over, and to move beyond that horrible time.

You were stationed there for some time, weren't you?

Q: Well, I was there. But the war was going on. I was there in the early 70s.

GREENE: That must have been a really tough time for you.

Q: Well, not really -- I mean things were essentially winding down. We were pulling a lot of troops out.

GREENE: Were there a lot of Vietnamese coming to the consulate trying to get out?

Q: A number, yes. But we didn't have huge lines. That came later on. But it's hard to sort those times out, I think, for all of us at the time. I thought that Vietnam was -- it was before they really started to unravel and I thought it would hold on. And it didn't.

Well, then when you came back to The White House, how was seating arranged at the press conference? Did you have a specific seat?

GREENE: No, not really. Although people, just like in school, people tended to center -- to gravitate towards certain places. And the big name White House correspondents sit in front. But no, there was no particular place for others. Although that, that may have changed. And the pressroom is different now.

But in early 1991, I went over to Saudi Arabia. I wasn't covering The White House at that particular point. I was covering Desert Shield.

Q: Well, let's talk about the Desert Shield. What did they do with you?

GREENE: I went to Dhahran, Saudi Arabia, the closest I could get to things at that stage, January, 1991.

Q: You couldn't go up the road?

GREENE: Not at that time, no. And then, in February, the war actually started and so there were SCUD missiles coming into Dhahran and Dammam. Before then, it was kind

of interesting and challenging, trying to come up with stories while nothing was happening. Just before the actual war, Desert Storm, began.

That's when you try to get creative and you write stories about Saudi women wanting to drive and Saudi fashions and Saudi morality police and Saudi cooking (*laughs*). Life on the base for the military people. It was something.

Q: OK, let's talk about being in Saudi Arabia and being a woman. Let's talk about clothes and morality police.

GREENE: Yes, it was challenging, frustrating and exasperating. The morality police would chase you around, literally. I had a longish black dress with long sleeves. And I was going somewhere with my driver and the morality police came up. They carried a switch and they would switch women's legs if they weren't covered properly. And he didn't even look at me, but he looked at the driver and said, "Get her out here. Get her covered up." It was very annoying. And then there was a big controversy for the military women who were in uniform and the Saudis who were supposedly our allies, being very demanding about what the women in the military did or didn't do, and what they wore. I think we were a little slow, but finally made it clear that these people are military personnel and they're not subject to your national dress code. But it's not a place I would want to go for a vacation (*laughs*).

Q: Did you find yourself being able to talk to our female troops who were there?

GREENE: Yes. In fact, the relationship between the media and the military was almost too close. We were so dependent on the military for everything from transportation to information that I think some of the reporters almost became part of the military. They got very wrapped up in the whole lifestyle.

Q: It's very easy to do.

GREENE: Still, when the war started, the military people were just great. I mean they were fantastic. I was among the few journalists who went with the Marines when they entered Kuwait the first couple of days. And of course that wouldn't have been possible without the military. You simply couldn't go otherwise. And when we got to Kuwait City, there was nothing there. It was devastated. Food gone. Stores, homes, hotels looted and destroyed. The military people provided water and MREs (Meals Ready to Eat) for us. And they were very, very kind and good. We were literally embedded with them, maybe beyond the point where it was possible to be totally objective. Not that I saw anything done that I would have found wrong or objectionable.

Q: Well, I mean let's talk a bit about that. I mean here you are, you're with troops. Was there anything you could really write about? Did you write about tactics?

GREENE: There was plenty to write about. We could write about individuals and what they were doing. Thinking back to what I said about Gannett News Service and the idea

that a lot of papers all over the country were out there as potential recipients. What I wrote about was people serving. I wrote about a Coast Guard company from Wisconsin, for example, and the people who had come from their posts in Wisconsin to serve in the Middle East. The stories went to their hometown papers, and the Coast Guard people received the recognition and understanding they deserved. They were more than happy to cooperate.

Q: What would a coast guard company be doing in Dhahran?

GREENE: One of the things they did was help clean up tremendous oil spills caused by Iraq's burning of oil pumps. The oil burned in infernos, and spilled into the water. Hundreds and thousands of birds were killed and injured. The Coast Guard helped put out booms and barricades, rescued animals and put out fires.

Q: Well, then how were you received in sort of the shopping centers of Dhahran, Dammam, and all?

GREENE: Well, you pretty much had to be accompanied by your driver. I didn't go shopping all that much. There was a lot of partying going on, which surprised me. I thought alcohol was forbidden by Islam, but soon found that sheiks and lots of others had their own private stills, plus access to gin, whiskey, bourbon and anything else they wanted.

In Kuwait, as in Saudi Arabia, it was interesting to note that the nationals expected the U.S. Military to do so much for them, as if they were hired help. In Kuwait, it was cleaning up the mess and reconstructing roads and buildings. It was almost as if we were another work party from the Philippines.

Q: What would the Americans be doing?

GREENE: One thing they did was to clean up the Kuwait City zoo. The zoo was *awful*. It was devastated. The animals were slaughtered by Iraqi soldiers and often eaten. It was just horrible. The elephant was tortured. Carcasses were strewn everywhere amidst terrific filth. One Army man, on his own initiative, had taken it upon himself to heal the elephant. The elephant had been tortured and burned and this guy took it upon himself to rehabilitate this poor animal. And a lot of others came in to clean up the devastation and feed the animals, who were close to starving.

Kuwait City was just a mess. For quite a period of time there was no water except for a couple of hours a day, and no electricity. I stayed on the 16th floor of a downtown hotel, and had to walk up to get there. I would fill the bathtub during the hours of water, then use that until the next day's supply came.

Q: The Kuwaitis, did they organize any troops?

GREENE: No, not that I know of, although Kuwaiti military forces did work with

Americans. But it definitely more an American effort. There was a lot of drama too. When the Iraqis fled the Kuwait City -- you've probably heard of the Road of Death.

Q: Yeah.

GREENE: And that was just incredible. When the American bombers struck, Iraqi soldiers began to run from the city toward the border. They tried to carry off whatever they could, but many were killed on the way. There were charred corpses, Jeeps and tanks that had exploded and burned. A swath of stolen goods: I saw a wedding dress, a washing machine, guns, jewelry, anything you could think of. Apparently they just tried to take anything they could, and run. It was horrific.

Q: Well, were there a lot of prisoners of war when you were there?

GREENE: I didn't have anything to do with that.

Q: Did you see any of our troops go into mosques or anything like that, or?

GREENE: No, you mean to do devastation? No, I didn't see anything like that. Our military were reminded almost daily to be respectful of the Muslim culture and to not do anything that would annoy or insult either the Kuwaitis or the Saudis.

Q: Did you get any information from the Kuwaitis?

GREENE: Oh, lots. They were so happy to be liberated. Especially at first, when the Marines came in and the Iraqis had fled. We were greeted like heroes. Thousands of people lined the streets of Kuwait City, ululating and waving Kuwaiti flags.

There was a huge influx of people riding through the city in cars and just being elated and happy that it was over. And even though a lot of them returned to find their stores and homes destroyed, there was just an awful lot of elation and happiness that it was over, and gratitude too. I think they were very glad that they had received our help.

Q: Did you have any particular experiences in these first hours of the liberation?

GREENE: Yes, just being there and going in with the Military, walking for a long way, and riding in a convoy with lots of armor all around. And then just when the convoy went through the city, the welcome it received from the Kuwaitis. And then the terrible devastation. At the hotel, there was nothing: The water didn't work, the elevators didn't work, the rooms were stripped. It was just a place to stay. There was just nothing there. The swimming pool had been half-emptied and was full of debris and filth. There was just a lot of vicious, deliberate destruction that had been committed.

Q: Well, how long did you stay with the troops?

GREENE: I was gone from January to March of 1991. And then I came back home in

March when it was winding down.

Q: Well, then did you run across anybody in our consulate or embassy either in Dhahran or in Kuwait City?

GREENE: Well, Edward W. (Skip) Gnehm was the Ambassador to Kuwait at the time. He was in Taif, Saudi Arabia while the Kuwaiti leadership and the emir were in exile there. And he was fantastic about providing information and guidance and just being a great resource. And he'd put us in touch with the emir and a lot of the ministry people who were over there in Taif waiting to go back home.

Q: Did your paper send you out to do any particular type of reporting?

GREENE: Well, a lot of it was "What have you got for me today?" because we were in a better position to know what was newsworthy. But there were lots of questions about, what is the plan, what is the strategy, who's going to be doing what, who's fault was it, you know, this kind of thing. And there was a team of us there. So it was pretty much distributed -- or else amalgamated into a single presentation.

Q: Well, did you have any feel towards the end game? Because we didn't seem to have much of a plan of what to do at the end. Was that apparent, or not?

GREENE: Yes, it was kind of a ragged ending. And I don't believe that we realized that it was going to be a little bit difficult to make the transition back, putting the Kuwaitis back in charge. Because they did expect so much from us. And then, you know, just what to do about Iraq after that as well. Of course one of the huge issues was all the oil well fires that were set by the Iraqis and the tremendous -- there were a lot of stories that we did about the oil spill -- the oil spills and the fires, the animals who were covered with oil, the economics of the whole thing. So that was a whole different set of concerns.

Q: Did you find yourself concentrating more on where are you from, soldier and that sort of thing?

GREENE: A lot like that, yes, because there was so much interest at home and in all those places where we had newspapers.

Q: Well, you must have in a way had a bigger portfolio than most newspapers? Because most newspapers would be -- the Des Moines thing would be looking for --

GREENE: Right, right.

Q: -- Iowa soldiers.

GREENE: Right, exactly.

Q: And you had all these anywhere.

GREENE: Yes, lots of potential. It was very nice too, because people really appreciate being appreciated and being asked questions about what they were doing.

Q: Did you get any feel for what the Iraqi occupation was like?

GREENE: Well, you know what happened is that most of the Kuwaitis left. The leadership certainly did. And the wealthy people left. And of course when they left, most of their homes were either taken over or destroyed. So I didn't run into very many ordinary people who were suffering. It was, you know, the property, the animals, and then the worker people who were still there. The Filipinos and the other nationalities who were accustomed to working there. They were in a bind because they couldn't necessarily go home and they had no place to live or work, no income anymore.

Q: Well, did they yank you suddenly out of there, or were you there for a considerable amount of time?

GREENE: Well, no, I didn't get yanked out. I think I just stayed until there weren't very many stories to write anymore toward the end of March. Just kind of petered out once the U.S. military entered Kuwait City and got things recaptured. You know, there eventually wasn't much left to write about, no more conflict, no more bombings.

Q: Was there at all a feeling of well, this makes up for Vietnam? I mean we were -- did anyone talk in that nature or?

GREENE: No, I don't think so. I think at least this time we have a real bad guy. We know who the enemy is. Once Kuwait was regained there was a sense of finality and closure, whereas in Vietnam that didn't happen.

Q: Food was at all available?-

GREENE: There was no food at first in Kuwait. And that was a big, big issue. And I think that's what happened at the zoo. The Iraqis ran out of food there too, and that's when they began eating the zoo animals and dogs and other creatures that you would think of as domestic animals.

Q: How'd you find the GI (Government Issue) clothing? I would think this would be very uncomfortable in the heat and all this?

GREENE: We didn't wear military clothing. Well, some of the reporters did, which was another sign of too much proximity. The uniforms the military were wearing were summer camouflage uniforms. And it didn't seem to be too hot. However, as the war and bombing began and we were still in Saudi Arabia, the military outfitted everybody with gas masks and bulletproof vests. And those were very hot, extremely hot and uncomfortable. Our reporters and photographers from USA Today brought our own vests. In fact, we bought our bulletproof vests out near Dulles Airport from Oliver North,

who had a company out there that made Kevlar vests. And that's where we got them.

Another item that became troublesome was the gas mask. We had to put it on every time there was a SCUD attack or other imminent danger, as we went to the bomb shelter under our hotel. The rubber strap would catch in your hair and pull it out. That hurt!

Q: Did you ever run across General Schwarzkopf?

GREENE: Only at briefings. He would come occasionally to do the briefing. Every day there were a number of briefings for the press. And he was there sometimes. But usually it was a lower ranking officer that did the briefings.

Q: Well, then did you go directly to The White House from there?

GREENE: After the Gulf War, I came back and did some more White House coverage. But mostly I worked on Congress, covering mostly foreign affairs. Whether it emerged at the The White House or as a State Department story or as an overseas crisis story. I went to Somalia, I went to Haiti, I covered the Kobe earthquake in Japan. Gorbachev's visit to the U.S.

Foreign affairs, wherever they expressed themselves through the departments.

Q: Well, how about the Kobe earthquake? I've been in a few and I have somewhat of an interest. Not too much.

GREENE: *(laughs)* Well, I went after the initial quake. I flew to Osaka. And the train tracks between Osaka and Kobe were destroyed, so we walked. I think it was about 20 miles. We walked to Kobe. And, and just wrote about the destruction and the aftermath. We did a lot of interviews with individual people and families who had lost loved ones, who were still looking for people, who were trying to do clean up. That was pretty devastating.

Q: Did the Japanese seem well organized in dealing with the problem?

GREENE: Yes, I think they were. They did a very good job. They were organized and motivated and at one point they even didn't want any help from outside. That might have changed eventually, but they, they really seemed to have a handle on it.

Q: Did you run across non-governmental agencies or individuals who were trying to give food or clothing or something?

GREENE: Yes, a lot of them. To the point where there was some redundancy and conflict going on among the agencies about what needed to be done and who was going to do it. Getting supplies in there was a problem for a long time because the airport runway was damaged, the train tracks were damaged, the roads were gone. So initially, getting supplies in there was a big problem.

Down at the port I remember seeing ships and big boats just washed right out of the water and smashed into buildings. There was a tsunami after the earthquake. But just the force of everything getting washed up there was incredible.

Q: Wow. Well, did they both strike you as a place you wanted to go to for a vacation?

GREENE: No (*laughs*). I don't think so. Although I had a stopover in Dubai, and that was interesting and very fancy.

Q: I must say, Dubai, I see these pictures and all and I was a Vice Consul working out of our Consulate General in Dhahran back in the '50s. And Dubai was the end of the world. And then all this oil money came in -- and they had to figure out something to do with it, so they just restructured the whole geographic situation there.

Did you feel that you were part of Gannett's rapid response team?

GREENE: Yes, I did. That was mainly what I did. They call it parachute journalism (*laughs*), but I did a lot of that.

Q: Well, how about with Gorbachev's visit to the States. Any comments about that?

GREENE: Well, it was very warm. He and Raisa were very, very happy to be here and they were welcomed and it seemed like a very positive thing. I remember shaking hands with him and thinking what a big, warm, beefy handshake he had. He seemed really, really friendly. And I think that it was an important moment, after so many years of Americans thinking of Russians as our Soviet enemies, to see them in person and to see Raisa out among the people.

And the same when Yeltsin came, although he was more of a clown. I remember when he drove a tractor out on a farm in the Midwest. It was like watching a cowboy run around a pasture. He just seemed to be having a blast, like a little kid (*laughs*). But I got the feeling that, in terms of peoples, the Russians and the Americans have a lot more in common perhaps in terms of personality and outlook than say the French.

Q: I think there is. There's a sense of the open frontier. Which we have completely absorbed and the Russians have.

GREENE: Right. There's a roughness and an openness, sense of humor, sense of camaraderie. And I can never imagine being that playful and happy with the people of some other European countries. Just too many cultural differences. But Russians and Americans seem to have a lot in common. Plus, there are so many Americans who have genealogical roots in that part of the world.

Q: Well, did you gain any impression of Gorbachev?

GREENE: I thought he projected a very scholarly, friendly persona. Not anything like you'd see in Putin today. You know, sort of a grouchiness or animosity. I didn't sense that at all in the way he acted with President Bush or with any of the people who approached him.

Q: Did you find that -- you were representing a major American newspaper chain -- did you find that the British or the French or the German press acted differently, or not?

GREENE: Do you mean the other members of the media?

Q: Yes.

GREENE: Well, a lot of people didn't take U.S.A. Today seriously. You know, The New York Times and The Times of London.

Q: Did you have a chip on your shoulder?

GREENE: No, not really. And then there's another whole element of journalist, especially in places like Saudi Arabia and Somalia and Haiti where there was active unrest going -- it's like the French Foreign Legion of journalism, sort of cowboys looking for adventure. And they just follow disasters around the world and enjoy being in the middle of the excitement and they're usually freelancers who are selling their stuff to newspapers who don't have their own people in a certain place. But that was interesting. That's just a whole different separate community of reporters and photographers who are taking risks and loving the excitement of it.

Q: Well, how did you feel when people are shooting around, literally shooting? Did you feel that discretion was a better part of valor, or what'd you do?

GREENE: Well, we were -- we had several SCUD attacks in Dhahran while I was staying there. You just learn how to take the precautions necessary. But on the other hand, nobody forced any of us to be there. And so you accept the risk when you accept the assignment, because it's what you want to do. But there are limits. During one SCUD attack in Dhahran everybody was in the bomb shelter in the basement and I got a call from one of my editors who said, "I want you to go upstairs and look -- go outside and see what's happening," *(laughs)*.

And that was the one time I said, "No, I'm not going out there when SCUDs are coming in," *(laughs)*.

Q: Well, I interviewed Ken Stammerman. And Ken was a Consul General in Dhahran at the time. And he was talking about there was one reporter, kind of obnoxious guy, but he was saying -- he was standing on the roof of some place in Dhahran, said, "Well, that fell off there 300 yards from my left or something."

And people from home back in the States are calling Ken up and saying, "Get down. That

son of a bitch is calling the shots for you.” You know, I mean, and it was true.

GREENE: It must have been a CNN reporter. There were a couple of them who were real cowboys.

Q: Yeah, I mean they didn’t really realize what they were doing.

GREENE: Right. Well, you know, they did get pretty wrapped up, some of them, in what was going on.

Q: Well, you did this until -- by the time you left, then you went to The White House?

GREENE: No, I never worked at The White House. I only covered The White House.

Q: OK, tell me the difference between working at The White House --

GREENE: Oh, well, I didn’t work for -- I didn’t work for the government. I worked, you know, everybody has a beat at the paper. And one of my beats was The White House and then one was the State Department for a certain period of time. And then these foreign affairs on-the-scene things.

Q: What was your impression of the people who you dealt with at the State Department?

GREENE: Well, generally speaking you didn’t get very much from them. They weren’t very forthcoming.

Q: We’re trained.

GREENE: They were trained, yes.

Q: Well, the idea it just comes naturally.

GREENE: Yeah. You just don’t give any useful information (*laughs*). No, then there were the peripheral agencies, like USAID and the other agencies that worked in some of the same areas. But it was, it was so political. I mean people are so reluctant to say anything that might get them in trouble, let’s say.

Q: Well, right now we’re going through a state of looking at an attack on our Consulate General in Benghazi in which the Ambassador and two other Americans were killed. And the question is very intense and has nothing to do with what really happened. It’s design is done by Democrats to make it, the Ambassador, his support was very poor, which it probably was. But it’s all political. It has nothing to do with the situation.

GREENE: Right.

Q: It’s just to make Obama look bad. You know, it’s one of these unfortunate things that

you get.

GREENE: Yeah.

Q: Well, did you ever have to go out -- were you ever in Egypt?

GREENE: I was in Egypt, yes. That was part of the JetCapade trip, when we did a survey of Egypt -- not a political situation story, but just an overview of the country and the people, issues, Pyramids (*laughs*).

Q: Well, had you had any sort of briefing about, or knowledge of Islam before you went to Saudi Arabia?

GREENE: A little. Some of what the military was getting. Nothing specific for reporters other than general, cultural things to be aware of. That was all a part of the press briefing. I guess you could say that we got a little bit of advance. But from what I've heard from other people, interviewing people subsequent to their posting in other countries, nothing you ever receive as a briefing is enough to prepare you properly. You just have to be there and try to be sensitive as possible, and try not to be belligerent or patronizing when you're in another country. I think the Saudis kind of tried to take advantage of the cultural differences by harping on them, "You're in our country and you need to respect our culture," and so on, to the point where it was not reasonable. Especially in terms of the military and military personnel trying to do their jobs.

Q: Well, then you're coming back to Washington. How long were you working in Washington?

GREENE: Well, I was always based in Washington.

Q: You're yanked out.

GREENE: Yes. Going to other places for periods of time, but coming back. And then I left the newspaper in 1996 to become Executive Director of a non-profit organization called The World Press Freedom Committee, which is interested in global freedom of expression issues. And so I did an enormous amount of traveling, and that's when I got to go to a prison (*laughs*). With Zimbabwe journalist and human rights activist Geoffrey Nyarota.

Q: Well, in '96, what was the state of the press would you say vis-à-vis freedom?

GREENE: There was a lot of discussion in this country about how much should be published or shouldn't be published, and about military secrets and so on. But the issues in our country are so minor compared to other countries. And even in countries that we would think of as western free countries, such as Great Britain and France and Germany, there are some pretty restrictive laws about the press. And then in places like Cambodia and Zimbabwe, of course, it's just crazy. Egypt has very restrictive laws about what can

be published. So the aim -- and I'm not sure how successful it was -- was to get these countries to change their laws, to bring them more in line with what we think of as a free press. But even today, there are so many places -- and it's becoming a harder issue now with all this about Muslims being insulted by cartoons depicting Mohammed a few years ago. I think it's actually getting worse now, because people are tying free expression to incitement of terrorism. And it's just such a fine line. I think that there's an awful lot of legislation out there that can be abused terribly to restrict free exploration of legitimate issues.

Q: Well, I sometimes think that the treatment of Islam is akin to the treatment of Muslims or Arabs in Israel. You've got to be very careful and you don't want to insult them. Yet, there's a hell of a lot of things that are going on that are pretty awful. I mean treatment of women, treatment of minorities, intolerance. But how did you feel about going out to these Islamic places?

GREENE: Well, when this cartoon issue came up, I was with the World Press Freedom Committee. And we advocated for the right to publish freely and against laws that made it a crime to do that. So a lot of the times the issues that we got involved in weren't, you know, religious so much.

For example, in Zimbabwe, there was quite a famous editor, Geoffrey Nyarota, who was under surveillance and summoned to appear in jail. And a delegation of press freedom advocates went there and met with officials about the harassment. We went with him to one of his arraignments and really ticked off the Zimbabwean government and President Robert Mugabe and his press man, Jonathan Moyo. But that's kind of the thing that we did, was trying to urge people to understand that shutting people off is not the way to make your policies popular. And the only way to really win the hearts of people is to let them speak freely and express themselves.

Q: Well, to capture the period of the time, what was happening in Zimbabwe at the time?

GREENE: There was a lot of unrest politically between Mugabe's people and those who wanted to have democratic elections and freedom to express themselves. Nyarota and other editors who called for free elections were labeled traitors, and treated as such.

And so the editor and newspapers who were calling for free elections were, were labeled traitors. They were arrested and harassed on the basis of those charges. So it was very difficult to separate the political situation from the laws that were already on the books. They just used what was there. And that was -- that's pretty prevalent in many countries.

Q: Did you find that when you were a reporter you were sort of herded together I mean when you went off to Zimbabwe?-

GREENE: Well, I wasn't a reporter then. I was, you know, director of a non-governmental organization.

Q: Oh yes.

GREENE: So no, I wasn't. But what we heard implied was more, "How dare you snoop, interfering westerner coming to tell us how we should run our government." That's basically what they would think of us. So it was kind of a diplomatic challenge to try to get to talk to people without really getting them angry with you and accusing you of trying to interfere.

Q: Yeah. Well, it's become very apparent. What about in Zimbabwe, what was the situation that caused you to go there and be particularly careful in interviewing?

GREENE: Well, the issue was that so many journalists were in jail or being arrested or harassed or even killed. We went to talk with some of the journalistic leaders and to try and speak with some of the government leaders about the virtues of entertaining more free expression in their countries and changing their laws. How that a free press is generally associated with a strong economy. It's not always true, but in enough cases that it's one of the arguments that we use.

Q: The first place, you did this Executive Directorship from when to when?

GREENE: From 1996 to 2003.

Q: Wow. Who organized it?

GREENE: Well, it's an international organization of press freedom groups. The World Association of Newspapers, the Committee to Protect Journalists, the International Press Institute, the Inter-American Press Association, Inter-American Broadcasters, and others. A group of international freedom of expression organizations that work together to fight for press freedom.

Q: Did you have the feeling that press freedom was being rather specifically under attack around the world?

GREENE: I think so, yes. Many journalists, and especially in Latin America, at that time were being murdered, assassinated in Colombia and Mexico. And so although murder and individual attacks on journalists is addressed by the Committee to Protect Journalists and the Reporters Committee for Freedom of the Press, our focus was not only on that, but on the fundamental environment in which these atrocities took place. If it's not illegal to report on these things then you're less likely to get thrown in jail in Latin America. A lot of it was associated with drugs and exposing drug transactions. But in the rest of the world it's usually all about power.

Q: Well, was anybody shooting at you?

GREENE: No, not in that part of my life. As a reporter in Somalia we got shot at. But not as a press freedom advocate.

Q: But was Zimbabwe -- was it all Mugabe?

GREENE: Yes, and his henchmen. Some of these people do get very angry and accuse you of siding with criminals. Which is what happened there.

Q: Well, was there any -- of course a government can name anyone it wants a criminal. And if the person's opposed to your government -- then they're a criminal.

GREENE: That's the problem with the laws that make it, for example, a crime to insult the king or the Prime Minister or the flag. Interestingly, some of the countries we think of as democratic -- including the United Kingdom, France and Germany -- have laws that are surprisingly restrictive and archaic. Having to do with insult and respect and so on.

I must add a word about some of my most interesting and rewarding work, which followed my newspaper and non-profit careers. This was doing interviews working with ADST and the United States Institute of Peace.

This was thanks to my acquaintance with former ADST Executive Director Dan Whitman, whom I met in Cameroon. I was a visiting journalism trainer and he was the embassy's press and public information expert. When he returned to Washington and to ADST, he invited me to help interview people who had worked on Provincial Reconstruction Teams in Afghanistan and Iraq. I spoke both in person and by phone with dozens of wonderful people who had worked, or were still working, on PRTs representing the Department of State, Department of Agriculture, USAID and the Department of Justice. I hope that the candor and extensiveness of their comments has been helpful to those who organize and oversee PRTs and similar operations.

In 2007, I went overseas to interview embassy folks in Cyprus, Lebanon and Turkey about their contributions in the incredibly complex, and successful, evacuation of Americans from Lebanon following a 2006 attack coming from Israel. Each of these people acted as heroes in helping some 15,000 U.S. citizens to safety.

All of these jobs, in journalism, press freedom and interviewing, have -- I hope -- helped individuals and leaders better understand the ideas and motivations behind many of the world events that we explored.

Thank you so much for allowing me to describe these incredible experiences.

Q: It sounds like you had a hell of a lot of fun.

GREENE: I know. I did (*laughs*).

Attachments: List of USA Today headlines on stories written by Marilyn Greene

USA Today work summary -- 1988

January

February

March

3/25/88: JetCapade page on Israel. Interviews with PM Yitzhak Shamir, Ariel Mayor Ron Nachman, Jerusalem Mayor Teddy Kollek, US Ambassador Thomas Pickering, Israeli Ambassador Moshe Arad

April

4/1/88: JetCapade page on Saudi Arabia. Interviews with King Fahd, Prince Mohammad, Prince Abdullah Bin Faisal, U.S. Ambassador Hume Alexander Horan, Saudi Ambassador Prince Bandar Bin Sultan Bin Abdulaziz

4/8/88: JetCapade page on Egypt. Interviews with President Hosni Mubarak, U.S. Ambassador Frank Wisner, Egyptian Ambassador El Sayed Abdel Raouf El-Reedy

May

5/20/88: JetCapade page on China. Interviews with General Secretary Zhao Ziyang, Taiwan President Lee Teng-hui, U.S. Ambassador Winston Lord, Chinese Ambassador Han Xu.

5/27/88: JetCapade page on Japan. Interviews with PM Noboru Takeshita, U.S. Ambassador Mike Mansfield, Japanese Ambassador Nobuo Matsunaga

June

6/3/88: JetCapade page on Korea. Interviews with President Roh Tae Woo, U.S. Ambassador James R. Lilley, Korea Ambassador Ton-Jin Park

6/10/88: JetCapade page on Vietnam. Interviews with General Secretary Nguyen Van Linh, Foreign Minister Nguyen Co Thach, Ho Chi Minh City Mayor Phan Van Khai, Economic Adviser Nguyen Xuan Oanh

6/17/88: JetCapade page on The Philippines. Interviews with President Corazon Aquino; Marcos in Hawaii. U.S. Ambassador Nicholas Platt, Philippine Ambassador Emmanuel Pelaez

Story filed: Philippine cardinal Jaime Sin welcomes aid plan

July

August

8/12/88: JetCapade page on Poland. Interviews with President Wojciech Jaruzelski, Solidarity leader Lech Walesa, U.S. Ambassador John R. Davis, Polish Ambassador Jan Kinast; Mikolaj Kozakiewicz, Poland's "Dr. Ruth."

September

9/1/88: Solidarity edges toward recognition (P.1)

9/8/88: Solidarity no longer fears martial law in struggle for reform
9/9/88: JetCapade page on the USSR. Interviews with General Secretary Mikhail Gorbachev, Foreign Minister Eduard Shevardnadze, International Adviser Anatoly Dobrynin, U.S. Ambassador Jack Matlock, Soviet Ambassador Yuri V. Dubinin
9/12/88: Burma vote could affect drug flow to USA
Safety over (air) stunts here (P. 1)
Bargain over Hamadi (hijacker of 1985 TWA Flight 847) may be in offing
9/14/88: Hard choices loom for U.S. in South Africa (after Reagan administration provides refuge for three South African apartheid foes)
9/19/88: Coups pulled off in strife-torn Haiti, Burma
9/20/88: Revitalized U.N. opens (43rd annual) session
9/23/88: 'Good prospects' for arms talks ... Soviet (FM Eduard Shevardnadze) looks to next year
9/29/88: Rumors fly as Soviets call Central Committee meeting (P.1)
9/30/88: U.N. calls for release of Higgins (Marine kidnapped in Lebanon)

October

10/24/88: Demands stir new hope for hostage (Terry Anderson) deal (P. 1 lead story)

November

11/1/88: Polish shipyard closing 'final blow' for talks (on Solidarity's legal future)
11/3/88: Israeli polls favor Shamir in tight vote
11/4: U.S. Jews to Israel: Don't cater to right
U.S. rabbi (Schneerson) influences Israel vote
11/9/88: Sakharov: He's 'rehabilitated'; 150 aren't
11/11: Britain and Iran restore relations
11/14: PLO leaders move toward recognition of Israel
11/15: PLO backs peace move, Israel's 'right'
11/16: U.S. rejects Palestinian state... Unilateral declaration unacceptable
11/18-20: Soviets talk turkey on chicken
11/21: World briers: Yugoslav unrest, etc
11/22: Canada backs free trade with the USA
11/25: Mandela's out of jail, but not free
11/28: UN asked to shift session for Arafat (who was refused a US visa)
11/29: US 'firm and final' on visa refusal for Arafat
W. German presses Iran for news on 9 US hostages

December

12/2: Soviets OK Gorbachev's streamlining
Big Apple visit may help polish Gorbachev's image
12/5: Geneva-bound Arafat takes 'wait-see' approach to Bush
12/7: We won't bury you (story about translation at the UN)
12/8: If it (Gorbachev's UN speech) works, it will be a 'coup' at home Reagan: Read our smiles' ... Gorbachev: Reduces Soviet army by 500,000 troops; Today: Cuts visit short, returns to earthquake disaster

12/9: Soviet (Armenian earthquake) relief is on the way ... Problems pile up for Gorbachev
12/16: (Middle East) Peace talks: U.S. back in 'central' role
12/20: Israel coalition: Partners at odds
12/20: Interview with Winston Lord, US ambassador to China, and Bette Bao Lord
12/21: Interview with Lawrence E. Bruce Jr., CEO of U.S. Committee for UNICEF
12/21: Polish leader (Jaruzelski) promises change
12/22: Group decides quake (Dec. 7 in Armenia) calls for CARE packages
12/30: 10 years of friendship for USA, China (Cover Story, USAT Int'l)

USA Work Summary -- 1989

January

1/5/89: 'Self-defense -- pure, simple' (Congress supports U.S. downing of two Libyan jets)
1/7-9: Some Soviet bloc states greet change
1/9: Nerve gas: Pressure on for cuts (P. 1 lead story)
1/10: Shultz legacy hard earned
1/12: Mexico arrests spark labor unrest
1/16: Shultz wraps it up on a positive note
1/18: Poland party OKs resolution on unions
1/19: Israeli crackdown (on Palestinians) causes furor at home, abroad
1/20: The first family tree (profiles of George and Barbara Bush family)
Familiar face bids farewell (Charles Redman)
1/23: Fleeing misery in Nicaragua
1/27: U.S., Soviets to 'break the ice' on (Bering Bridge) expedition
Sakharov: Support will fail Gorbachev
1/30: Soviets push to exit Kabul this week (P. 1 lead story)
1/31: (Full Page, 6A) 'Good faith' effort enhances U.S.-Soviet ties (Soviet withdrawal from Afghanistan)
But Soviets condemned for 'scorched earth' exit
Afghanistan faces future of turmoil and shortages

February

2/2/89: PLO rejects Israel proposal (to withdraw from occupied territories if PLO settles for limited autonomy)
2/3: Quayle takes jabs at ex-presidents
Terror fills his resume (Ahmad Jibril, suspect in bombing of Pan Am Flight 103)
2/7: Poland's future at stake in talks
2/8: (Barbara) Bush touts literacy
2/9: Her fund will aid Arabs (Washington psychologist Nuha Abudabbeh)
2/21: 'Without hope, future' ... Soviet Jews in Italy wait to emigrate to USA (Cover Story). 'Glasnost' an immigration nightmare
2/24: U.S. values this nation of progress (China, in advance of Bush visit)
Bush to see different Beijing this weekend (Marietta Times, GNS)
2/24: Ambassador gets new job after his boss' visit (Lilley to replace Lord)

March

- 3/2: 'Enough is enough,' says Tower daughter
3/6: Barbara Bush begins new effort for literacy
3/10: Bitter struggle over Tower ends ... For tourists, it was 'history in the making'
 First lady waits for puppies
3/11: First lady's puppy vigil: 'I'm a nervous wreck'
3/16: Bush children shun spotlight
3/17: Project is a brush with past ... White House is primer on paint (P.4A)
3/20: Tower to speak up -- for a fee
3/22: First lady visits tots with AIDS
3/25: President Bush, Congress agree on Contra aid plan (Herald-Dispatch)

April

- 4/5: White House dinners now in a state of 'work' (not state dinners)
4/6: Redskins' Manley tackles Japanese -- the language
4/10: Even the White House needs helping hands (volunteers)
4/14: White House blooms displayed
4/15: (Port Huron Times Herald) Bush, Congress reach budget accord
 Wright, Sen. Bentsen scoff at 'optimistic' plan
4/18: Working spouses feel heat (of investigation of Jim Wright's wife)
4/19: (Cover Story) Private lives in public eye.. Lawmakers' spouses live with 'vague'
 lines.... Wright case puts spouses in spotlight
4/22: Barbara Bush has real flower power (grounds keeper Irv Williams tours)

May

- 5/1: First lady, fast friends (Mildred Kerr, Marion Chambers and Bobbie Fitch) ...
 Staying in touch with Texas ties A 'best pal' closer to new home (Ann
 Stewart)
5/4: 45% of lawmakers' mates help pay bills (P. 1 lead)
5/6-8: Iran: Palestinians should kill Yanks
5/10: Bush's physician (Burton Lee) sees role beyond the White House
5/16: New life, not money, awarded in visa lottery
5/17: Bush brigade: Mixed blessing for Kennebunkport (Full page, 7A)
 'We're proud, but it's a pain'
 A look inside President Bush's getaway town
 For a scattered family, it's home
 Mabel's Lobster Claw is family's first choice
5/19: Learning to read humbles (Dexter) Manley
5/23: Reform-minded Wan Li is 'critical' to future
5/29: 'Average' earner is 'trying to meet expenses' (congressional honoraria)

June

- 6/5: Chinese survivor (Nien Cheng): Change is in wind
 Wife of China envoy (Bette Bao Lord) sees dramatic ending for book
6/6: Growing numbers (in China) hear news via underground grapevine

6/7: Citizens, leaders share strategy: Get the tiger to leave mountain (Chin-ning Chu, author of The Chinese Mind Game)

6/7: A rosy reception for Bhutto ... After 'frank, fruitful' talks, she's guest at Bushes' first state dinner

6/8: First lady's silver secret... Not even hair stylist knows

6/12: China chaos tests envoy's skills (James Lilley)

6/12: Shush, it's Bush's birthday ... President to 65th observe quietly
Astrologer: Stars shine on Bush
Best wishes from his brothers (William and Jonathan)

6/13: Chinese dissident (Liu Binyan) afraid to go home

6/16: Bush offspring reflect on 'first family' life (Full page 9A)
Jeb: He's 'comfortable,' keeping it in perspective
George W.: Learned lessons of character
Dorothy: To daughter president still just 'my dad'
Neil: First family life comes with ups, downs
Marvin: Least public son declines an interview

6/19: Bush in-law charity idea bears fruit (Sharon Bush's Karitas bears)

6/20: Chinese still pursue 'rioters'... Li says they can't go 'unpunished'
Fear keeps many students in U.S.

6/28: Poles seek U.S. boost for homeland

July

7/3: Bush: Visit to Poland for 'support'

7/5: Poles seat multiparty legislature
Country battles hard times

7/6: Walesa sees limits for Solidarity

7/7: Bush to put diplomacy to test ... Poland and summit on his agenda (he is on 10-day European trip to Poland, Hungary, The Netherlands, France)

7/7: (GNS) Zloty for Zloty, Poland can be U.S. retiree's paradise

7/8: U.N. envoy (Marrack Goulding) on hostage trail (Lt. Col William Higgins)

7/11: Bush visit brings Poles together ... Next stop: Symbolic shipyard
Rival factions attend lunch for president
Walesa plays host away from pomp

7/11: (Cover Story, International ed) Poland 'Day to day' struggle
Bush speech raises hop for economic aid.... Poles today 'aren't sure of the future' (Malgorzata Zuch)

7/11: Flowers, songs and a hug for Barbara Bush

7/16: Barbara Bush defines role, steals show (Cover Story)... She's 'warm, very natural' and loves her life. 'I don't consider it a job'
P.2: Guardian of the first lady's image... For Anna Perez, it's just saying 'no'
P. 9: Interview with Barbara Bush

August

8/11: First lady busy with garden, guests

8/15: Apartheid foes see no big change (following Botha's resignation)

8/16: Walesa says he'd be premier ... If Poland 'wants it, I must do it'

- 8/17: Poles ask Walesa: Be our leader (to create Eastern Europe's first non-communist coalition government)
- 8/17: Beirut Siege. In the city, the goal is to stay alive... 'Just want to wake up in morning'
Two sides of the 'Green line'
- 8/21: 'We are capable; Poland is alive' (Cover Story) ... New leader: 'Believe and we succeed' ... Poland faces 'giant tasks,' but 'We can do a lot'; Mazowiecki profile, 2A
- 8/22: Walesa to the party: Get with it (P.1)
Poles lose editor, gain leader ... "He's very quiet and cool. He knows how to listen well. He doesn't make decisions quickly or impulsively." -- Polish journalist describing Prime Minister-designate Tadeusz Mazowiecki
- 8/24: Pole (PM Mazowiecki) seeks 'support of all' ... Reaches out on eve of election
- 8/29: Blacks step up protests (in South Africa)
- 8/30: In 12 tries, president comes up empty: Hook, line, sinker (Bush has no luck fishing in Maine)

September

- 9/6/89: (Health) Care plan for elderly called unfair
- 9/20: Burma teacher (Min Sun Min) on run
- 9/29: Answer elusive on catastrophic care law

October

- 10/3: GNS) Health care fight heats up
P. 1 -- Catastrophic care vote in House today
P.2 --Seniors split on law's worth... A godsend, say some; a disaster, say others
- 10/4: Compromise next for health plan
- 10/11: Bush sidesteps catastrophic care issue
- 10/13: Here's your chance to ask Mrs. Bush
- 10/16: Ex-POW (John McCain) is behind (care) rescue plan
- 10/19: Congress haggles over how to ship Poland aid
- 10/20: House OKs aid plan for Poland, Hungary

November

- 11/6/89: Walesa packs for a 'too short' trip to USA... Solidarity chief lives in a fishbowl (from Gdansk)
The 80s: Turbulent, triumphant times
Poland's reluctant celebrity learns how to adapt
U.S. businessmen in Poland hope to set up shop
Op Ed page interview w/ Walesa: Poland needs USA in order to succeed
- 11/14: Walesa starts off his USA visit with medal (of Freedom)
- 11/15: \$25 M in aid earmarked for Polish phone system
- 11/16: Walesa charms Congress, moves on
- 11/20: Walesa captivates the nation (from Philadelphia)
- 11/29: U.S. team will help Poles with economy
- 11/29: Mrs. Bush's eyes 'haven't gotten worse' (P.1)

December

- 12/4: The Summit. U.S., Soviets 'seeing a new era'
Eastern Europe... A 'good chance' to discuss changes
Trade issues... Bush vows to ease tariffs if immigration laws liberalized
- 12/5: Chinese students hope Congress overrides veto (and allow them to stay longer)
- 12/6: First lady chimes (Salvation Army bell) for charity
- 12/7: White House in spirit ... First lady presides over decorating
- 12/8: Auschwitz survivors form Polish firm
- 12/11: White House will be full house (holiday parties)
White House tree promotes literacy cause
- 12/15: Senator warns elderly on health care (with McCain in Phoenix)
- 12/18: Dear Mrs. Bush ... (Letters to and answers from the first lady)

USA Today summary -- 1990

January

February

March

- 3/26: Profile Chief of Protocol Joseph Verner Reed

April

May

- 5/31: 'Daisy earns dinner nominations (state dinner for Gorbachevs)

June

- 6/1: Table settings and seatings ... Guests of honor (Gorbachevs) look 'really relaxed'
State dinner guest list

July

August

- 8/2: Diplomacy new career for Polish ambassador (Kazimierz Dziewanowski)

September

October

- 10/5: Romanian (President Ion Iliescu) gets put on hold
- 10/8: Inquiry. Interview with Ion Iliescu, president of Romania
Dissident (Marian Munteanu): Romania not free yet

November

December

12/24: Family awaits gift: Romanian orphan
12/31: Poland's new premier (Jan Krzysztof Bielecki) a quick-paced reformer
Undated: Romania's unwanted orphans
Maryland doctor gives 'irrecuperables' a chance

USA Today summary -- 1991

January

1/15: Kuwaitis said to be Iraq's new human shields
1/16: Cover Story. Thoughts turn to home, the task ahead ... 'It ain't a war yet. Every night I hit my knees, talk to the Big Man and ask his help'
1/17: Operations base welcomes start
1/18: Scud threat grounds airliner (in Dammam)

February

2/1: War correspondents' families wait and worry, too
2/1: (*Port Huron Times Herald*) *War correspondents' families wait and worry, too*
2/1/91: B-52s bomb convoy
2/5: Saudis to clean oily gulf birds
2/25: Oil fires turn Kuwait into a 'disaster zone'
2/26: Scud attack (on Al-Khobar barracks) shatters war's initial euphoria
2/27:/91 New Kuwait to rise from the ashes of war

March

3/1/91: Tales of terror dampen Kuwaiti euphoria
*3/11/91: *War is where you meet yourself*
3/15/91: People, problems meet emir ... Out of exile into war-torn land
(Emir Jaber Ahmed Sabah returns 7 months after leaving Kuwait)

April

4/16: Barbara Bush: Saddam should be 'hanged'
4/17: Israelis rebuff U.S., open settlement
4/23: U.N. resolutions give talks a framework
4/30: Bush doctor's manners panned (Dr. Lee grabs Donna Britt)

May

5/19: (Detroit News) House divided: Some Israelis want occupied territory only as bargaining chips, others say they're an important buffer zone
5/24: 'Excellent moment' for new economic plan (economist Grigory Yavlinsky)
5/30: Lawmakers open debate on renewing trade benefits

June

6/4: China two years after Tiananmen Square... 'Sleeping volcano' still simmers ... 'Dissidents map future'
Ambassador (Zhu Qizhen) insists reforms are on tap

- 6/10: (From Jerusalem) 'Excitement's gone' from Mideast peace effort
Settlement (Revava) reflects postwar stalemate
- 6/12: Democrat (Nancy Pelosi) wants reform tied to China trade status
- 6/20: Cover Story. Baby boom going bust. Scandals put Romanian adoptions in limbo...
New scrutiny entangles U.S. families (wanting to adopt Romanian children) ...
'The idea of having a baby and fattening it up like a pig to sell is just repugnant'
- 6/24: Kurd: Saddam will deal ... But others say promises empty
- 6/28: As unity date approaches, Europeans stand divided ... Bringing 12 nations together
as one

July

- 7/26: Gorbachev holds his own at party parley
- 7/31: Bush gives Baltics a boost

August

- 8/1: Bush wants 'Israel's answer' on conference
- 8/8: Doctor (Barbara Bascom): Resume Romania adoptions
- 8/8: Bethlehem mayor (Elias Freij) praises Baker for arranging talks with Israel
- 8/12: China willing to sign N-treaty
- 8/13: Arafat hopes talks restore his standing
Palestinians: 1 mission, many leaders ... Big issue is who'll go to talks
- 8/15: Two former captives (Robert Polhill, Frank Reed) share their insight ... Polhill has
high praise for debriefers
- 8/20: Gorbachev unable to manage the impossible (appease both conservatives and
reformers) (attempted coup)
- 8/21: New (Soviet emergency) committee trio toe even harder line
- 8/22: Interview with Ambassador Jack Matlock, ambassador til last week
Ex-ambassador analyzes coup
- 8/23/91: Yeltsin outlines rapid-fire change

September

- 9/6: Israel to push ahead on loan guarantees (to settle Soviet refugees)
- 9/9: Parents in pursuit of justice ... Their plea: Don't use son's killer in hostage trade.
(son Robert Stethem killed aboard hijacked TWA Flight 847 in 1985). Don't want
son's killer exchanged for German hostages in Lebanon
- 9/12: Phase 2 (of shock therapy) for Polish economy
- 9/16: Iran cuts rail service after hijacking by Azerbaijanis
- 9/18: Congress hopes to avoid battle over dispute (over President Bush
to delay vote on Israeli loan guarantees)request
- 9/23: Cover story: Bush signals U.S. won't desert Israel
- 9/24: Arafat has tough sell ahead ... Must win consensus from factions on Mideast
conference
- 9/26: U.N. team leader (David Kay): Grit, good humor during tense times
- 9/30: Shamir: Compromise possible ... Soviet media in the red ...
Correspondents 'stranded' in USA (journalist Vitaly Gan of Pravda)

October

- 10/1: Peace Corps parting ... Director (Paul Coverdell), group off to new quests
- 10/3: Congress builds case against China
- 10/8: Troops force ban on leader of Haiti (President Jean-Bertrand Aristide)
- 10/8: Palestinian team (Hanan Ashrawi and Faisal Husseini) arrives Wednesday
- 10/9: OAS to squeeze, freeze Haiti
- 10/10: Isolation will oust Haiti coup leaders, OAS leader (Joao Baena Soares) predicts
- 10/11: Palestinian leaders meet Baker on talks
- 10/11: Syria limiting talks?
- 10/23: Palestinians push Israelis to 'line'
- 10/24: Cambodia peace accord signed ... "Dark page in history" has turned
- 10/28: Japan's next premier (Kiichi Miyazawa) plans bigger world role
- 10/28/91: Full page. Will Peace Dawn Now? (Egypt, Lebanon, Syria, Israel, Jordan)
- 10/29: Soviet reforms may put envoy's (Ambassador Viktor Komplektov) job on the line
- 10/30: Imelda Marcos ready for home (husband died in 1989)

November

- 11/14/91: Baker's trip to China won't change much, dissident (Fang Lizhi) says
- 11/15: U.S., China face 1st test after uprising Many analysts have 'low expectations for this trip' (Baker visits China, breaking travel ban in effect since Tiananmen in 1989)
- 11/19: Congress upset with Baker's scant gains in China (esp. Rep. Sam Gejdenson, D-Conn.)

December

- 12/3/1991: Front page. End in sight for U.S. hostages... (Joseph) Cicippio freed; (Alann Steen likely next (Terry Anderson still left)
- 12/3/91: Page 2. Cicippio feels 'terrific,' but family is concerned
- 12/9: Four years of Palestinian revolt... 'Intifada' (of 1987) spotlights territories
- 12/10: Gorbachev fights to land on his feet
- 12/10: Four key republics: Russia, Ukraine, Byelorussia, Kazakhstan
- 12/14: Ex-envoy to Kuwait (W. Nathaniel Howell) ready for new task
- 12/16/91: Soviet orphans.
- 12/17: Page One. U.N. lifts Zionism's cloud ... Racist link from 1975 repealed
- 12/17/91: P4A. Zionism resolution called 'peace obstacle' ... Vote in U.N. 111-25 to rescind
- 12/18: Sofa diplomacy: Still a few hard spots (Middle East)
- 12/19: Peace talks end, resume Jan. 7 -- somewhere
- 12/20: Allies seek ways to pressure Libya (and punish for bombing Pan Am Flight three years earlier)
- 12/20: Demjanjuk's son: Dad was framed
- 12/24-25: Page 1 lead story. U.S. to give recognition to Russia (as successor to USSR)
- 12:24: (P. 4A) Loose ends abound for new union... Nuclear control tops transition list
- Undated: Host of U.S. churches see foreign aid as investment

USA Today summary -- 1993

January

1/14/93: Somalian gunman dies in clash with Marines

For inner circle, it was the best of times (Dr. Lee describes cruiser dinner when a storm kept Gorbachev away)

February

March

3/4/93: 'Frustration' over Bosnian airdrops

Russian aid: (Leahy warns of return to Cold War without aid to Russia)

3/18: China threatens to drop Hong Kong negotiations

(Lu Ping says Patton's trying to change rules)

3/31: Iran, Iraq, Libya are targeted on terror

April

May

5/1: (China Daily, Page 1). Photo of MJG with Chen Li, editor of China Daily and Vice Premier Li Lanqing

5/1-3: (From Beijing) China's Olympic effort to woo Games

5/25: A tedious quest in Vietnam ... Normalization hinges on MIA/POW issue
In Hanoi, ex-enemies find common ground

June

6/23: As Japanese political structure crumbles, summit concerns grow

6/30: (From Ho Chi Minh Cit) Embargo keeps Vietnam on economic edge ... U.S. treads warily on path to normalization

July

7/1: U.S. to east Vietnam loan stance

7/6: Poll: Russian aid not top priority

High-profile vets John Wheeler, Lewis Puller, Jr., Ed Timperlake, Terry Anderson) throw weight behind end to Vietnam embargo

7/7: from Kumamoto: Japan's farmers feel heat from simmering trade feud

7/8: 'Post-Cold War blues' dim hopes for Russian aid

7/9: South Koreans await Clinton's assurances

7/10: Putting the war in the past... Loans key to Hanoi's economic reform plan (says advocate Nguyen Xuan Oanh)

7/13: Poll: Renewed Vietnam ties favored

7/14: Destruction is 'beyond belief' after Japan quake
(7.8 off island off Okushiri island)

7/15: Lack of money and direction add to (immigration) woes

7/15: POW researcher (Stephen Morris of Harvard) blisters Pentagon (Over documents raising question about Vietnam's accounting for POWs)

7/15: Beijing uses hard-sell approach to woo 2000 Summer Olympics

7/16: Bold change unlikely in Japanese election
7/19: Japanese (LDP) party loses after 38-year rule
7/19: 'A big moment' as Japan restructures government (after loss by LDP)
Japanese party loses after 38-year rule
(*PM Kiichi Miyazawa's Liberal Democratic Party wins only 223 of 511 seats*)
7/23: Japan scandal... Shin Kanemaru, LDP, on trial for tax evasion
7/29: Mondale chosen as envoy to Japan

August

8/5: 'Comfort women' get apology from Japan
A new Japan premieres today (*parliament to select a new pm after LD loses majority*)
8/6: USA's global goodwill is going on a strict diet (*USAID is to reform itself*)
8/17: "Operation Irma" sparks interest. U.S. to join airlift effort in Sarajevo
(*US joins international effort to airlift injured children out of war zone*)
8/18/93: War rages as Bosnia talks peace ... Nations offer to evacuate Bosnians needing
doctors
8/21: China frets about life after Deng... Near 89, he's still revered and hated
8/23: (International edition) China's Deng turns 89 amid succession fears
8/25: Cover story. Medical care restores hope for wounded...
'If they send Serbs, we will treat them, too. We don't ask about origins'
Enemies in Yugoslavian war share recovery in US

September

9/1: 'New Reality' for Israel, PLO... Most are cautiously optimistic
(*historic agreement on Palestinian autonomy developing in Washington*)
Tough sell begins for aid to Russia
Strobe Talbott lobbies for \$2.5 billion aid plan
9/2: 'This was last chance' for Mideast peace (with Lee Katz)
9/?: Apple growers say 'Japanese way' holds little sway.. *Washington State apple
growers fight Japanese regulations keeping US apples out.*
9/13: Ending Enmity.. 'A lot of taboos are being broken' (with Mimi Hall)
Israel and the PLO sign historic agreement at the White House
9/14: Clinton hits deadline on Vietnam ties (Cover story, International edition)
(*deadline looms for renewing Vietnam embargo*)
Vietnam trade rules eased... Embargo to remain; vets divided
9/15: A hit on the Hill: Arafat charms lawmakers
9/22: Yeltsin takes iron grip in Russia (p. 1, lead story)
Yeltsin takes another gamble (written with Lee Katz) *Dissolves parliament when it blocks
his economic reforms*
'Incredibly bad timing" for foreign aid
China hoping to stage 'Major coming-out party'
New Asian strategy pushed (Capital Line, P.4 A)
9/24: Senate OKs foreign aid bill
Sydney, human rights hailed (*US Olympic officials and athletes laud choice of Australia
over Beijing to host Olympics*)

End of interview